# Stop Trafficking! AwarenessAdvocacyAction

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FOCUS: This newsletter explores some of the ways financial institutions are helping in identifying, interfering with, and prosecuting human trafficking.

## Following the Money

It is estimated that, globally, human trafficking is a \$150 billion business each year. In thousands of small transactions, most of this money passes through legitimate financial services, such as banks and credit card companies.

With proper training, financial institutions can identify illicit finance related to human trafficking and report potential cases. In addition, legal experts state that taking a "financial crimes approach" to human trafficking is highly effective in generating evidence that allows law enforcement to differentiate the traffickers



from their victims, document the traffickers' motives, corroborate victim testimony, and assist in identifying affiliates of the trafficker.

There are several identifiable stages of a human trafficking scheme during which traffickers may interact with the financial system. The illicit financial activity that human trafficking produces includes, but is not limited to:

- payments associated with the transport of victims and other logistics such as hotels or plane tickets;
- a collection of proceeds generated by the exploitation of trafficking victims and by the sale of goods produced through their exploitation;
- the movement of proceeds;
- and bribery and corrupt dealings to facilitate human trafficking.

Traffickers may use prepaid credit cards, establish bank accounts for victims or businesses, or ask potential victims to transfer money using money remittance services to pay labor recruitment fees.

Banks and credit card companies have designed effective systems for identifying potential human trafficking through patterns of payment, spending, deposits, travel, and otherwise moving money. These transactions offer financial institutions opportunities to detect and interfere with human trafficking. Moreover, in some cases, they are legally required to do so.

In the United States, federal laws, such as the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) and the USA PATRIOT Act, mandate that financial institutions monitor and report suspected illegal activity.

The management of funds made by human trafficking can constitute money laundering. This legal obligation, unique to the finance industry, has created systems to detect suspicious activities associated with human trafficking, money laundering, and related financial crimes. These systems have provided law enforcement with the information to identify and prosecute traffickers.

Additionally, since financial crimes are not as reliant on testimony from the victims, this has proved effective in prosecuting traffickers in cases where the victims are too scared or traumatized to cooperate with the investigation.

Financial institutions are also listening and learning from the experience of victims and creating survivor support programs that increase access to financial services and employment opportunities. Partnerships between governments, financial institutions, law enforcement, civil society, and survivor experts are critical to identifying illicit financial activity associated with human trafficking.

## Financial Red Flag Indicators Related to Human Trafficking

In 2020, the U.S. Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network unit (FinCEN) released its Supplemental Advisory on Identifying and Reporting Human Trafficking and Related Activity, which focused on four tactics increasingly used by human traffickers to carry out and hide the proceeds from their illicit operations. These four tactics include:

- Establishing front companies.
- Engaging in exploitative employment practices.
- Creating funnel accounts.
- Utilizing alternative payment methods.

These tactics should signal increased attention to financial institutions' responses to human trafficking.

There are several stages of a human trafficking scheme during which traffickers may interact with the financial system. Therefore, providing financial systems with red flag indicators to detect suspicious financial activities may assist law enforcement and other authorities in identifying and prosecuting human trafficking.

No one transaction or red flag by itself is a clear indicator of human trafficking; accordingly, financial institutions may consider applying these red flags in combination with other factors, such as a customer's profile and expected transaction activity. Some red flags include the following:

- Use of cash: through couriers and money remitters; repeated cash withdrawals and transfers in small amounts to avoid identification or reporting requirements;
- Use of multiple bank accounts and credit cards, as

well as multiple aliases, identities and addresses;

- Use of front companies, straw persons, or false identity documents;
- Inexplicable lifestyle compared to the client profile;
- Relations with persons with suspected or known criminal history;
- Use of cash to invest in real estate/high-value goods;
- Frequent deposits or withdrawals with no apparent business source;
- Lack of any lawful business behind banking operations;
- Use of ATM and credit cards at times inconsistent with regular operating hours for the business;
- Frequent money transfers to "risk" countries;
- Third-party cash deposits made at various bank branches and via ATMs;
- Laundering of cash through casinos, import/export trades, etc.;
- Use of the hawala (an informal channel for transferring funds from one location to another through service providers) or other informal banking systems.

Click here to learn more.

#### A cryptocurrency is a digital form of money used to purchase goods and services the same way the dollar may in the United States.



However, cryptocurrency allows people to make a certifiable, traceable, yet anonymous transaction. According to the Government Accountability Office, virtual currencies are used more frequently in human trafficking. At the same time, Polaris reports that it is the second most accepted form of payment on 40 platforms in the online commercial sex market. Both the buyer and seller can remain anonymous.

Cryptocurrencies use "blockchain technology." Blockchain technology is also used for online voting and crowdfunding. Moreover, some financial institutions are testing the technologies' ability to lower transaction costs. Cryptocurrency transactions are recorded on public blockchains. Depending on to what extent technology is applied to make the transaction anonymous, blockchain transactions can be analyzed to identify patterns indicative of criminal activity.

After Visa, MasterCard, and American Express stopped processing payments to Backpage.com in 2015, those posting on Backpage were limited to paying for ads using Bitcoin or Backpage credits. In addition, after Backpage was shut down, other commercial sex websites created their own cryptocurrencies.

While data from surface web platforms - for example, Google - are available to the public and law enforcement, online platforms on the "dark web," a hidden part of the internet where users access sites using specialized software, can limit the risk of detection and give some semblance of anonymity. Unfortunately, these hidden sites are increasingly being used for sex trafficking.

However, innovative anti-money laundering compliance solutions using advanced analytics, network analysis, and artificial intelligence to monitor transactions and identify and report suspicious transactions are being developed to assist in detecting human trafficking networks.

Click here to learn more.

#### Financial Institutions in Sex Trafficking Recruitment

Recruitment fees paid through legitimate financial systems are also standard within some types of sex trafficking, most notably within illicit massage businesses. Like recruiter fees paid for temporary work visas, many victims of this type of trafficking take out large loans to hire visa brokers to handle the expensive and often fraudulent visa-handling process.



In 2020, Deutsche Bank was fined \$150 million by the New York State Department of Financial Services (NYDFS) for compliance failures related to client Jeffrey Epstein, his sex trafficking enterprise, and correspondent banks. NYDFS found that Deutsche Bank "conducted business in an unsafe and unsound manner [and] failed to maintain an effective and compliant antimoney laundering program."

Click here to learn more.

#### Financial Services Industry Role in Labor Trafficking Recruitment

The International Labor Organization estimates that 28 million people live in forced labor. Foreign victims of labor trafficking often pay enormous recruitment fees to labor brokers, even though these fees are illegal. Temporary work visas are usually tied to a specific employer. If the employer terminates the worker, the

worker is out of legal status and eligible for deportation, creating a power imbalance. Many of these workers have gone into debt to attain a job. Leaving a job, no matter how exploitative, would cripple them from paying off their debts. Traffickers take advantage of this situation.

Monitoring monetary transactions on the recruiter or recruitment agency accounts may reveal indicators of suspicious recruitment activity linked to debt bondage or other coercive practices.



Moreover, some foreign victims make enormous inperson deposits at their local banks to broker accounts which highlights the importance of training on victim identification for customer-facing bank staff in source countries. Bank tellers and other branch staff may notice, for example, an individual being escorted and monitored while at the bank or an individual's paycheck or identifying documents being held by this "escort." Another concerning indicator is if someone insists on being listed as a guardian or authorized user on an account. Many banks already train their customer-facing staff to recognize similar behavioral indicators of abuse and how to document their observations.

For industries at high risk for labor trafficking that use formal payroll structures with paychecks or direct deposits, the most suspicious signs of trafficking may be the absence of ordinary business expenses. Other red flags of labor trafficking may include paychecks with negative balances or unreasonably low amounts for an entire pay period, which may indicate debt bondage, or infrequent payroll processing, indicating that pay may be withheld to prevent employees from leaving.

# Advocacy

### UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, widely ratified worldwide, dictates the criminalization of money laundering when proceeds are derived from human trafficking and urges signatories to endorse international cooperation between their respective national authorities addressing money laundering.

The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ("UNGPs"), which set forth the internationally accepted framework for the role of businesses in promoting and protecting human rights in 2011. These principles highlight the risks businesses face in their activities that may be linked to human rights violations, such as human trafficking. According to the UNGPs, "Business enterprises should respect human rights. This means that they should avoid infringing on the human rights of others and should address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved."

Human rights risks are unique to the financial services industry; a sector regularly focused on identifying and mitigating risk. Some of the human rights impacts on financial services include practices related to supply chains, human trafficking, and corruption.

Financial institutions have committed to upholding human rights by training their workforce on human trafficking and including risk factors in customer due diligence processes. They also have developed methods to detect human trafficking in their anti-money laundering functions.

Institutions also participate in the United Nations Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking Initiative's Survivor Inclusion Initiative by bringing survivors as bank customers enabling them to become financially secure. Moreover, financial institutions engage with local communitybased efforts to support vulnerable populations at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Meanwhile, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global standard-setting body for anti-money laundering (AML). More than 200 countries have contracted to use the FATF Recommendations, which require member countries to identify, assess, and understand money laundering and illicit finance risks and mitigate those risks. The FATF Recommendations provide a helpful framework for authorities to address illicit finance related to human trafficking by reinforcing their national AML laws and policies and strengthening coordination and information sharing domestically and internationally. The FATF Recommendations also encourage jurisdictions to assume proactive parallel financial investigations, including by collaborating with public and private financial institutions, as standard practice when investigating and prosecuting human trafficking crimes, with a view to tracing, freezing, and confiscating proceeds attained through this crime.

Finally, governments, investors, researchers, and civil society actors should study how microfinance and other forms of social finance can support survivors. The Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking is a public-private partnership started in September 2018 to respond to calls from the G7, the G20, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Security Council for governments to partner with the private sector to address human trafficking. Its Survivor Inclusion Initiative facilitates survivor access to essential banking services, such as checking and savings accounts, by connecting survivors to financial institutions. The financial sector can offer account qualification exception programs and low-to-no-fee second-chance accounts to support survivors in rebuilding their lives and prevent further exploitation.

Click here to learn more.

# FINANCE AGAINST

Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) is a multi-stakeholder initiative based at United Nations University Centre for Policy Research that enables the financial sector to mobilize against human trafficking. FAST works in partnership with entities worldwide, including international banks and regional banking associations, investor groups and stock exchanges, professional associations, survivor support organizations, regulators, and policymakers, and provides tools and training to financial sector stakeholders to take meaningful action against human trafficking. FAST's signature report, the *Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery* 

and Trafficking, provides a framework that different financial sectors and governments can implement to help end human trafficking. Please click here to learn more about the FAST initiative and the Blueprint report.

# **TIP Special Topic**

The 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report included tracking financial flows as a practice to eradicate human trafficking as a special topic.

Governments, in partnership with civil society and the private sector, can use forensic accounting strategies that allow financial institutions to identify and flag activity that may be consistent with human trafficking schemes.

Governments worldwide have established financial intelligence units (FIUs) to receive and analyze reports of suspicious financial activity that may indicate embezzlement, money laundering, and, increasingly, human trafficking. FIUs can detect transactions, track money flows, and collect evidence tied to human trafficking crimes.

Governments can develop procedures using information from suspicious transactions to hold human traffickers accountable. For example, in the United States, the U.S. Department of the Treasury uses its authorities, partnerships with law enforcement, and international engagement to combat human trafficking through targeted sanctions. The Department of the Treasury also protects the U.S. and global financial systems by blocking the property of numerous transnational criminal organizations, including those involved in human trafficking.

Some tools developed by Inter-governmental Organizations include:

- Money Laundering Risks Arising from Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants — published by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to identify red flag indicators of money laundering from human trafficking operations and foster reporting.
- Policy Guide on Following the Money in Trafficking in Persons Cases the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime is compiling regional practices and approaches to anti-money laundering and asset recovery tools to help law enforcement, prosecutors, and financial intelligence units combat human trafficking.
- Leveraging Anti-Money Laundering Regimes to Combat Trafficking in Persons Cases — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reports on participating States' promising practices to identify and prosecute instances of human trafficking through financial techniques, such as tracing, freezing, and confiscating proceeds.

Private financial institutions also play an essential role through internal mechanisms to monitor their customers' transactions for potential red flags. In addition, to mitigate risk, financial institutions, brands, and suppliers often turn to internal and third-party risk assessment, due diligence, and compliance firms for data on entities with which they are doing business and on potential perpetrators of financial crimes.

These firms provide critical services, often called "Know Your Customer" or "Politically Exposed Persons" services, to assist financial institutions and corporations in screening clients and business partners to avoid becoming complicit in money laundering and other crimes.

Law enforcement and government regulatory bodies also rely on these firms to coordinate with other agencies for investigative purposes.

Collaboration, data-gathering, and information-sharing within existing institutional frameworks can effectively disrupt financial flows related to trafficking in persons and thus provide practical tools for both the prevention of human trafficking and the prosecution of human traffickers.

Click here to learn more.



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT JUNE 2021

## Project PROTECT

In 2020, the Canadian Government initiated Project PROTECT to increase awareness of sex trafficking and the quantity and quality of suspicious transaction reporting. Canadian financial institutions, FINTRAC (Canada's Financial Intelligence Unit), financial regulators, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and technology companies collaborated to develop indicators of suspicious money laundering transactions from sex trafficking.

This led to a significant increase in the reports of suspicious transactions filed by financial institutions related to this activity. FINTRAC shared this information with law enforcement, which helped expand or refine the scope of their cases, uncover new targets, obtain search warrants, and identify assets for seizure or forfeiture.

Canadian authorities provided disclosures to counterparts in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Portugal, Jamaica, and Brazil, demonstrating the importance of international cooperation to end human trafficking.



# Credit Repair for Survivors of Human Trafficking

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), a United States government agency responsible for overseeing financial products and services for consumers, developed a new credit repair process for victims and survivors of human trafficking so that adverse information in their credit reports resulting from their trafficking experience will be blocked. This resource is a response to efforts by survivors and advocates to provide a pathway to financial freedom.

## Human Trafficking and the Super Bowl

In 2022, the Knoble Group partnered with Prove, a leader in digital identity, 30 banks, and law enforcement to launch a task force to prevent human trafficking around Super Bowl LVI. The partnering bands identified specific financial transaction pattern scenarios for identifying human trafficking. They then filed Suspicious Activity Reports (SARS) with law enforcement, allowing for early identification of suspicious activity and eventual prosecution.

Prove, the Knoble, and their partners worked together to compile their findings and build a project blueprint that can be reused and scaled for future initiatives.

Click here to learn more.

# Action



#### A Life-Giving Job for Every Survivor

Freedom Business is a global alliance to end human trafficking by addressing its economic roots. Freedom Business creates safe employment for survivors and those at risk of human trafficking. It is an industry facilitator for 110+ Freedom Businesses in over thirty countries worldwide. FBA removes the many barriers to growth and scale that no single business can address alone.

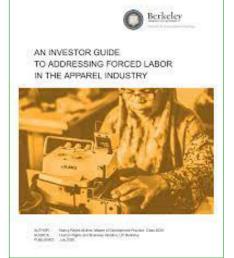
According to Freedom Business, 80% of those rescued from human trafficking will be re-trafficked absent safe employment opportunities.

Please click here to view a short video from the Freedom Business Alliance.

#### Debt Bondage Repair Act

In December 2021, President Biden signed the Debt Bondage Repair Act into law. The Debt Bondage Repair Act prohibits consumer reporting agencies (CRAs) from providing consumer reports that contain any negative item of information about a survivor of trafficking from any period the survivor was being trafficked. In addition, the rule creates a process through which survivors can provide information and have adverse credit information resulting from their trafficking experience removed from their credit report. This rule will allow survivors of human trafficking to do necessary things that require credit scores, like renting apartments, getting sources of credit, gaining access to essential banking services, and being employed.

Unfortunately, there will still be survivors who do not have the evidence they need to prove their victimization.



#### Investors Role in Combating Forced Labor

The Investor Alliance for Human Rights provides investors with a platform to address human trafficking. Investors can play an essential role in decreasing labor trafficking by setting expectations for how companies should manage their potential exposure to forced labor, tracking their progress, and holding them accountable.

Once invested in a company, investors can affect positive change through active engagement, filing resolutions, collaborating with peers, influencing public policy, and educating shareholders.

Click here to learn more.

#### **Engage Together**

Click <u>here</u> to view a brief YouTube video on How Businesses Can Prevent Human Trafficking. Hear stories and insight on how businesses and professionals can practically engage in this process.

Please click <u>here</u> to download a quick start guide on how Businesses can engage to prevent human trafficking.





#### Virtual Panel

Please click <u>here</u> to view the Virtual Panel: Empowering Human Trafficking Survivors | AFRJ Freedom Council.

#### The Banks Alliance Against Trafficking

The Banks Alliance against Trafficking is a series of regional working groups that support financial institutions in fighting human trafficking using their data. The Alliance brings together experts from financial institutions, NGOs, and law enforcement agencies to map the financial footprint of human trafficking in the formal banking system and to develop red-flag indicators of suspicious activity tailored to the region. The Banks Alliance group raises the profile of the vital role that financial institutions play in the fight against human trafficking, opens up constructive dialogue, and builds working relationships between financial institutions and law enforcement agencies. For more information, please click <u>here</u>. Action

# The Freedom Council: The Alliance for Freedom, Restoration and Justice

The Freedom Council is a group of business leaders and companies worldwide that aims to catalyze businesses everywhere to improve their existing Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to help end human trafficking.



Through their India Initiative, the Freedom Council partners

with those on the ground in India to implement a pan-India business initiative to end human trafficking and prevent it by protecting those most vulnerable.

The Alliance for Freedom, Restoration, and Justice requests that all business stakeholders participating in the Freedom Council sign a pledge to end human trafficking.

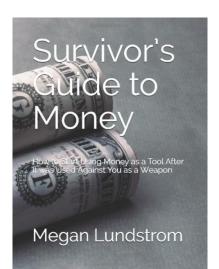
The Freedom Council partners with Randstad Sourceright, a global sourcing firm, to provide mentorship and job opportunities through the Hire Hope Program to women who are at risk or have been trafficked. The Hire Hope Program has three elements—restore, grow, and thrive.

Restore is a 12-week interactive career readiness training program. The classes, facilitated by Randstad employees, focus on building confidence, honing business acumen, building teams, and preparing for interviews, among other soft skills.

Grow is a 23-week paid apprenticeship that provides on-the-job training and incentives for transportation, childcare, meals, and clothing.

Thrive consists of temporary or permanent employment placement and six months of career transition support.

Please click <u>here</u> to view a one-minute video on the Freedom Council.



#### The Survivor's Guide to Money

Written by a survivor of sex trafficking, *Survivor's Guide to Money: How to Use Money as a Tool When It Was Used Against You as a Weapon* is the first financial literacy curriculum for survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. *Survivor's Guide to Money* is an evidence-based program designed to help survivors develop safety and self-care plans to work through high-stress financial situations and understand financial abuse and its long-term impact on financial wellness issues. This guide examines the concept of self-worth and identifies common triggers around money... and much more!

This workbook is designed to give survivors a framework to understand the financial abuse they endured, identify obstacles, and set goals to work towards on their journey to financial wellness.

#### The Knoble Group

Founded in 2019, the Knoble Group is a non-profit network of experts focused on preventing financial crime that harms the vulnerable around the world, including the prevention of human trafficking and child exploitation. Led by experts in fraud, financial crime, financial services, data, technology, and other professions, The Knoble's initiatives attempt to prevent crime and bring about systemic change. The Knoble works with five groups: Financial crime professionals (fraud, cyber, data, analytics, technology), financial institutions, businesses, government, and non-governmental organizations.

One example of how the group works to detect possible human trafficking included on their website is a nail salon open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. However, the bank notices that the business works with transactions going on overnight in increments of \$100 and \$200 bills. This is a red flag indicating that prostitution and trafficking may be occurring at the business.

Recently, The Knoble collaborated with STOP THE TRAFFIK, Traffik Analysis Hub (TAHub), and The Mekong Club, establishing a system in which information, data, and technology are shared to understand trafficking operations and disrupt the underlying infrastructure - from recruitment to illicit financial support. In addition, this collaborative approach promises to deliver greater protective and preventive measures and more aggressive and timely avenues for prosecuting offenders.

#### Save the Date!

U.S. Catholic Sisters Host Second Annual National Conference To Shed Light on Many Issues That Surround This Affront to Human Dignity

U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is hosting its Second Annual in-person conference in Chicago! Mark Sept. 28-30 on your calendar and plan on attending this amazing event where we will be celebrating our 10th Anniversary and launching our new name and initiatives. More details coming soon, and registration opens in May!

For more information, email info@sistersagainsttrafficking.org or call 267-332-7768.



Against Human Trafficking

#### The United States Chamber of Commerce Task Force to End Human Trafficking

comprises Chamber member companies. The task force's mission is to educate stakeholders, lawmakers, senior government officials, and the public about best practices in supply chain management and identify strategies to combat human trafficking. Companies with global operations and business partners develop detailed and effective programs to address human trafficking. The task force convenes meetings where stakeholders discuss their initiatives and partnerships with non-governmental organizations.

The task force develops toolkits to raise awareness and educate stakeholders and meets with federal government officials to advocate for the interests of Chamber members.

Click here to learn more.



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- Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
- Sisters of the Divine Savior
- Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- Sisters of the Holy Cross
- Sisters of the Holy Family
- Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
- Sisters of the Humility of Mary
- Sisters of the Precious Blood
- Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sisters of the Sacred Hearts
- Society of the Divine Savior
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- Southern CA Partners for Global Justice
- St. Mary's Institute of O'Fallon
- Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking & Slavery
- U.S. Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union

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