

**Human Trafficking Committed by Transnational Organised Groups:
Criminal Law and Criminalistic Means Combating**

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Abstract

The relevance of the subject is conditioned upon the rapid pace of development of human trafficking, which is a modern form of exploitation of persons for various purposes. The problem is the consequences of such criminal activity, particularly if it is committed by transnational organised groups, which affect both the social, political and economic development of the state and its international image. The methods used in this work are the following: legal hermeneutics, statistical, Aristotelian, analysis, induction, and comparative. The main results of the work are as follows: research of the concept of the criminal act of “human trafficking”, “transnational organisations”, clarification of the scale of this phenomenon through the coverage of statistical data in Ukraine and in the world, and the reasons for its occurrence.

Keywords: Illegal Migration; Criminogenic Situation; Transnational Organised Crime; Forensic Knowledge; Crime Prevention.

Introduction

Human trafficking can have different purposes: forced labour, sexual exploitation, and coercion to engage in illegal activities of vulnerable groups. Trafficking in human beings is a direct violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, freedom of movement and personal integrity (Getman, 2020). The relevance of the subject is conditioned upon the global nature of human trafficking, which transcends the borders of individual states and is committed by criminal organisations through established and coordinated methods of trade and trade routes. In addition, the need to explore this subject is conditioned upon the fact that the period of hostilities establishes conditions in which some groups of the population are more vulnerable due to mass displacement, migration, occupation, and lack of monitoring and control (Yaroshenko et al., 2023). Thus, the purpose of this work is to identify the main criminal law measures and innovative criminalistic technologies, the implementation of which will significantly increase the effectiveness of criminal law regulation, the process of detection, investigation and

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prevention of this type of transnational organised criminal activity, reduce the number of cases of such criminal manifestations and protect the population.

In the professional legal literature, only a few scholars have addressed this issue, exploring only specific, related issues. As for the issues of combating human trafficking, T.V. Prodan (2023) noted that the main problems in this area are the lack of public trust in law enforcement agencies and the lack of statistics. However, the expansion of financial and psychological support for victims, and the spread of an information campaign to raise public awareness of the risks of human trafficking are recognised as positive developments. In addition, the author notes that to combat such criminal activity, it is advisable to mobilise efforts in three main areas: general, individual, and, most importantly, criminological.

Exploring the degree of public danger of illegal activities committed by criminal organisations, including transnational organised groups, R. Orlovskiy et al. (2022) indicate that a criminal organisation has a significant impact on society and its security and state stability through evasion of power and economic control. In addition, there are considerations that the growth of such organisations, coupled with the insufficient influence of law enforcement agencies on this process, results in a decrease in public trust in law enforcement agencies and the level of legal awareness and morality.

In this regard, Yu.V. Kuzmenko and R.V. Dumanskyi (2021) explored the connection between hostilities and the spread of human trafficking in Ukraine. The authors note that military confrontation leads to demand for cheap labour and organ transplants, while low morale, fatigue, and low living standards establish conditions for the development of human trafficking, especially in the occupied territories. Scientists point to the need to reform criminal legislation and increase responsibility for illegal border crossings, enslavement, and forced labour, and propose the introduction of a separate research on the so-called “black transplantology”.

In turn, O.Yu. Drozd and L.V. Soroka (2023) explored how the war in Ukraine affects the geopolitics of human trafficking, in particular, the state of the fight against this human rights violation in the European Union. It is stated that strategic documents on combating human trafficking in the European Union have changed the background of the Russian invasion, in particular, a plan has been developed to strengthen coordination in the placement of persons who were forced to leave Ukraine in search of asylum. In addition, the authors note that both the war and the coronavirus pandemic have become a catalyst for the spread of illegal businesses that enrich themselves at the expense of vulnerable populations (Yusupov & Filipov, 2023). The authors point to the need to develop criminal and other methods of combating these phenomena, based on European experience.

Similar considerations are contained in the work of I.M. Legan (2021), who analysed the role of international cooperation in illegal migration and human trafficking. In general, the work indicates that transnational criminal organisations have developed well-organised criminal syndicates that, while engaged in human trafficking, invest profits in such criminal areas as arms and drug trafficking. The scholar notes that in this case, international cooperation is an effective way to counteract criminal groups, and some national reforms to expand criminal law methods of combating this phenomenon increase the level of security guarantees for the population and promote trust in law enforcement agencies.

The analysis of works on this subject indicates that the purpose of this research is to explore in more depth the issues of forensic and criminal law means of combating the phenomenon of human trafficking, in particular, if such activities are conducted by transnational organised groups. It is essential to outline ways to reform the system of investigation and qualification of this type of criminal activity, considering European and national experience, challenges and threats associated with the war.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted using several methods of scientific knowledge, in particular, the historical method, which was used to clarify the origin and development of the phenomenon of human trafficking in the world and its legal nature. The general scientific dialectical method allowed identifying the impact of such a phenomenon as human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups on social relations, the interaction of its various elements, public attitudes, and security factors within social groups. The method of legal hermeneutics, which was used to explore the main regulations of Ukraine governing human trafficking, and identifying the authorised bodies to combat the phenomenon, allowed the author to pay attention to the issue of reforming and improving the existing legal framework, especially criminal law. In addition, the method was used to draw attention to international regulations designed to ensure global security and combat human trafficking and the spread of transnational criminal groups. The method was useful in interpreting the main concepts of the research, including human trafficking and various forms of exploitation.

The method of analysis allowed disclosing the problematic aspects of the object examined – the phenomenon of human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups, establishing the cause-and-effect relationship between the development of such criminal activity and military operations on the territory of Ukraine, identifying the main forensic and criminal law ways to counter this phenomenon, the main groups of rights at risk of violation as a result of such

illegal activity; the method allowed focusing on the legal qualification of the crime. The statistical method was useful in highlighting data related to the number of officially recorded cases of human trafficking both in Ukraine and globally. The method allowed identifying which countries are leading in terms of the number of this criminal activity and which countries demonstrate examples of successfully combating the phenomenon.

The sources of statistical data in this work are: The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the International Labour Organisation. Along with the statistical method, the comparative legal method of scientific knowledge was used to explore foreign experience in combating human trafficking, which allowed identifying and analysing the positive aspects and best practices of other countries in combating human trafficking, exploitation, and illegal border crossing. The Aristotelian approach was used to analyse theoretical developments and legislative initiatives to improve the regulation of the sphere of combating human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups and related phenomena. The method of synthesis, in turn, allowed exploring and analysing of all criminal and forensic measures to combat the phenomenon and developing a vision of the Ukrainian strategy to combat this type of human trafficking. In addition, using such a method of scientific cognition as induction, a general conclusion was developed regarding the research subject based on the individual elements of the aforementioned object identified and analysed.

Results

The term “trafficking in human beings” means a gross violation of human rights, honour and dignity, which may include the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, using force, coercion, fraud or other means for exploitation (Macy et al., 2023). The exploitation of persons can manifest itself in various forms, in particular through forced labour in inhumane conditions, with low or no pay; sexual slavery and trafficking, which involves the forced involvement of persons (mainly women and children) in the sexual industry; exploitation can manifest itself in the form of involving children in work in dangerous conditions, another way of involving children in this criminal sphere is recruitment to participate in armed conflicts; human trafficking can be used to engage in organ trafficking (Niewiarowska, 2021; Dziuba, 2022). To understand the origins of human trafficking, it should be analysed the historical development of this phenomenon (Getman et al., 2021; Levchenko et al., 2023; Panov, 2023). In particular, the transatlantic slave trade in African people should be considered the beginning of human exploitation. On the territory of the Slavic states, such exploitation was manifested in the form of enslavement or serfdom (Novak, 2022).

After the abolition of slave labour relations, human trafficking took on new forms, in particular, as a result of the spread of prostitution and illegal migration, and forced labour, which were the logical consequence of the upheavals in society caused by the First and Second World Wars.

In general, the contemporary development of human trafficking is driven by a complex interplay of factors that differ across regions and contexts. These factors often establish conditions that make people vulnerable to trafficking and allow traffickers to exploit them for profit. For example, economic factors, such as poverty, low living standards, lack of employment opportunities, and widespread unemployment, can push people to look for work abroad and migrate, which, in turn, increases the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. Social and cultural factors, such as gender inequality, outdated moral values, and women's lack of access to education and employment, should be acknowledged as essential reason (Protosavitska, 2023). A low level of awareness leads to a higher risk of sexual slavery. In addition, it is advisable to mention the factor of military confrontation, which brings instability and causes massive movements of people abroad in search of refuge (Bozorgmehr & Díaz, 2022; Koulis & Fouskas, 2022). Frequently, such displacement makes people vulnerable and trusting, which can be used by traffickers (Shevchuk et al., 2023). It is necessary to outline the range of rights and freedoms of persons at risk of violation as a result of such criminal activity: the right to life, liberty, health, freedom from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to freedom of movement, to work in fair and safe conditions, the right to defence, legal assistance, education, identification and nationality, access to justice, freedom from discrimination (Kubarieva & Pertsev, 2022; Marmura, 2022).

Considering which groups of rights may be violated as a result of such criminal activity, the most dangerous is human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups or criminal organisations that operate across national borders and are structured and well-organised. Along with human trafficking, these groups may be involved in smuggling, arms trafficking, money laundering, cybercrime, and drug trafficking. Often, these activities are linked to or driven by other activities. Such groups have a specific hierarchy with defined roles, such as organiser, recruiter, corrupt official, and law enforcement. Transnational organisations are dangerous for several reasons, including the global nature of their activities, which cover different countries, causing difficulties in tracking their criminal activities due to the lack of international legal assistance and diplomatic relations. The activities of these organisations are possible with the assistance of individuals, in particular, those associated with law enforcement agencies, belonging to governmental structures and being corrupt. The impact of such groups on the economies of poor and third-world countries is crucial, as some regions of

such countries are often able to live only by facilitating drug trafficking, arms and human trafficking (Shevchuk et al., 2018). In addition, the danger of such organisations stems from the fact that they have well-established, well-established ways and means of trafficking in human beings, including through the recruitment of vulnerable persons, their transportation through agreed or uncontrolled routes, delivery and further exploitation of such persons. To illustrate the dangers of the activities of such groups, it is useful to provide some statistics in Figure 1.

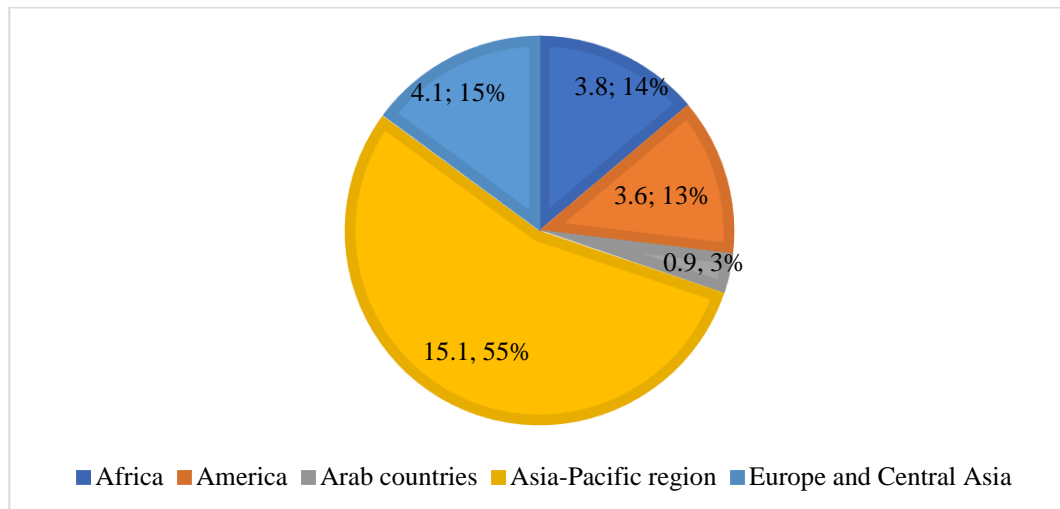


Figure 1 Number of people recruited for forced labour by region (million)

According to the International Labour Organisation, using forced labour annually brings transnational groups about \$150 billion, most of which is generated in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and Central Asia. Considering this state of affairs, authorised intergovernmental bodies have adopted several regulations designed to govern the issue of human trafficking and reduce its scale and impact on society. Thus, attention should be drawn to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, which states that an organised criminal group should be considered an established group of three or more persons that has existed for a long time, operates in concert to commit a serious crime, to obtain material or other benefits. Therewith, the Convention indicates the signs of transnationality of a criminal act, in particular, if the act covers more than one state; if the crime is committed in one state, but the stages of its organisation and preparation were committed in another; if it is committed in the territory of one state, but with the participation of an organised group that conducts illegal activities in the territory of

other states; if the crime is committed in the territory of one state, but the consequences occur in the territory of another.

In addition, it should be mentioned that Protocol No. 995_791 “On preventing, suppressing and punishing trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime” (2000) is supplementary to the Convention. This Protocol contains criminal law recommendations on combating this unlawful phenomenon, in particular, on the development of programmes and conventions designed to prevent human trafficking, including the framework for cooperation between law enforcement agencies and non-governmental institutions and public organisations; recommendations on levelling and reducing the impact of factors that increase the risk of recruitment for forced labour and other forms of exploitation; improvement of legislation in the field of criminal law, educational law-making, migration law. It is indicated that it is necessary to establish such border control rules that will reduce the risk of illegal crossing of the territory, to ensure proper verification of documents (Communication from the Commission..., 2021).

Attention should be drawn to foreign experience in combating this phenomenon, namely the decision of the European Union (EU) on the adoption of the EU Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025) (Kenny et al., 2023). It is indicated that the danger of organised crime on the Internet is currently the greatest, thus, the Strategy identifies the need for education and training to improve skills in IT forensics and expertise. In addition, it is proposed to establish a system for the mutual exchange of electronic evidence on organised crime to facilitate investigations in cross-border cases. It is expected that funding will be increased for the development of forensic technologies for investigating traces of crime to increase the chances of solving an offence by an organised group; and to improve the system of collecting data on previous crimes (Abbasov, 2022). The documents call for improving the exchange of information, evidence, and the results of criminal intelligence, and promoting international cooperation, particularly in the countries most affected by human trafficking – the Western Balkans, Africa, and Asia. In addition, the experience of the United States in combating human trafficking is particularly relevant. The country’s law enforcement system has several main divisions that specialise in prosecuting human trafficking and child exploitation cases, while there is ongoing cooperation with divisions that are mandated to provide critical and innovative support in cases involving trafficking committed through using digital technologies (Maksymenko, 2022). Such departments are authorised, among other things, to develop both national and international experience in cases of exploitation and trafficking in

human beings, and have the right to initiate international investigations in cases of particularly serious offences.

Notably, the United States has developed a special International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Programme, which focuses on forensic and criminal law methods of investigation, detection of crimes related to human trafficking, raising public awareness of the threat of transnational organised crime, and providing recommendations for legislative improvements to the process of regulating this phenomenon, development and improvement of resources, means of investigation, establishment of separate units, development of tactical capacity, improvement of the system of data collection on crimes related to human trafficking, promotion of international cooperation between those countries that are part of the same network involved in human trafficking, improvement of partnership between migration control, social protection, non-governmental organisations and law enforcement agencies (Orlovskiy., 2023). The problem of human trafficking is currently acute in Ukraine, considering the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the occupation of territories, and ongoing hostilities; as a result, the population is vulnerable and moving to safer areas, including abroad, which increases the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking outside the country. According to the State Labour Service of Ukraine, in 2019-2023, almost 49 thousand Ukrainians were exposed to the risk of human trafficking. A national survey demonstrates that about 30% of Ukrainians are willing to accept an unreliable job offer abroad, and another 27% said they would accept a risky job offer that did not include official registration of employment relations or the possibility of handing over personal belongings and documents to the employer.

According to Ukrainian criminal law, trafficking in human beings is punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to fifteen years. However, according to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 95 criminal offences were registered between January and July 2023, but only 45 cases were brought to court. The actual number of cases of human trafficking is much higher, in particular, since they can be committed abroad, and, therefore, access to specific data is even more limited. Thus, among the main reasons for the spread of human trafficking, which can affect Ukrainian citizens, are unemployment, the destruction of business in the occupied territories, weak social protection, hopelessness, violence, active hostilities in the area where the person lives, and corruption of the authorities, which allows transnational corporations to act with impunity, political instability in the regions where victims of human trafficking arrive. Regarding criminological ways of preventing this phenomenon, it is advisable to indicate the need to develop a strategy for identifying potential victims of human trafficking by age, social status, vulnerability, and gender. During martial law, it is particularly crucial to conduct

educational and informational talks with internally displaced persons and persons who are going to cross the border in search of asylum regarding possible recruitment, involvement in forced labour or other forms of exploitation (Onyshko, 2022; Popovych, 2023).

Considering that the greatest danger is posed by human trafficking activities committed by transnational groups, it is worth considering criminological methods of prevention of illegal border crossing/migration. Such measures should include the criminalisation of acts related to unauthorised border crossing and the organisation of illegal stay of persons outside the state (Haltsova et al., 2021). Considering the constant flow of people crossing the border, they should be identified with data on the fact of crossing the border and the country of destination. In addition, it is essential to strengthen cooperation, primarily between the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, and the National Police of Ukraine. Another crucial cooperation is cooperation at the international level. Here, it is advisable to pay attention to the Law of Ukraine “On Combating Trafficking in Human Beings”, which states that the Ukrainian state is open to cooperation and participation of international organisations to combat the phenomenon of human trafficking. It is necessary to mention that at present, international cooperation in the field of preventing human trafficking, of which Ukrainian citizens may become victims, is manifested in the control and registration of persons applying to the state for asylum, exploring how a person has settled in the country, whether they are registered with the social security system, whether they have means of subsistence and employment opportunities.

Considering the foreign experience and the already analysed state of regulation of human trafficking in Ukraine, it is advisable to identify some measures that would be useful to consider in further reform and improvement of the sector. The establishment of specialised units in law enforcement agencies (based on the example of the United States) may allow for more effective investigation of crimes related to human trafficking, in particular, such units will be authorised to prosecute, conduct intelligence activities, exchange information, and engage in international cooperation; introduction of digital technologies in the process of monitoring and combating human trafficking. Development and implementation of an effective anti-corruption policy, and initiation of financial investigations to trace cash flows and assets related to transnational organisations. Developing a joint information exchange platform, simplifying the procedure for requesting evidence and data through international legal assistance. Conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements to simplify extradition procedures. Increasing funding to improve the technological capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate this type of crime,

in particular through the introduction of software that allows for the recovery of destroyed, deleted correspondence and bank transfer data. In addition, it may be advisable to involve artificial intelligence in the development of a database of possible victims of human trafficking, considering the ability of technology to analyse and process large amounts of data (Kaplina et al., 2023).

Criminalistics, as an applied science, integrating modern achievements of science and technology, in modern conditions is called upon to direct its scientific and practical developments and powerful scientific potential to establish an effective system of forensic tools and techniques, the application of which should be designed to solve complex practical problems. Therefore, forensics as an applied science, which is at the forefront of the fight against crime, faces the challenges of providing law enforcement agencies and other special subjects of such counteraction with effective forensic recommendations in the fight against human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups. One of the most promising areas of combating such criminal phenomena nowadays is appropriate forensic support for combating this type of transnational organised activity. It is believed that it should be comprehensive and cover technical, tactical, and forensic areas of investigation (Shevchuk et al., 2023). These and other important tasks should be solved comprehensively and systematically, in particular, by improving criminal and criminal procedure legislation and developing theoretical and methodological foundations and scientific and practical recommendations for the investigation of such criminal offences. Among the areas of forensic support for combating such criminal activity, the most important is the development and improvement of forensic methods for investigating human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups.

In addition, by integrating these tools into the process of combating human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups, law enforcement agencies can expand their capabilities in identifying, investigating and prosecuting traffickers, gaining better opportunities to ensure the safety of individuals, and using new areas of improvement in the organisational work of actors in combating such criminal phenomena, and criminal legal regulation of this issue (Shatilo et al., 2023), and forensic support for effective combating of trafficking in human beings.

Discussion

For a deeper analysis of the relevant subject, in addition, it is necessary to pay attention to the works of other authors on the related subject. For example, K. Barrick and R. Pfeffer (2021) point to several destructive consequences of human trafficking that affect individuals, society in general, and the criminal justice system. The authors emphasise the need to establish accurate data on the scale of human

trafficking, as this is the first step towards developing an effective programme to combat this phenomenon. The author's findings only partially coincide with the results of this work, but it should be added that the process of collecting accurate data on victims of human trafficking and its overall scale is extremely difficult in the absence of access to information exchange between law enforcement agencies of different countries.

The issue of general counteraction to crime by law enforcement agencies was explored by V. Shevchuk et al. (2022). In particular, the research indicated that improvement in the process of investigating crimes and relevant methods depends on the correct definition of the leading principles of forensic science, among which the authors highlight the principle of covering all significant circumstances of the crime, the principle of compliance of theoretical knowledge with practical ways of combating crime, the principle of differentiation of offences. In general, the authors note that an effective fight against crime in Ukraine requires significant preparation for the process of improving criminal legislation and criminal procedure in general. The results of the authors do not coincide with the results of this work, but, notably, to combat and counteract one particular type of crime (human trafficking), it is necessary to generally improve the methods of investigation, detection of crimes, means of investigating traces of an offence, introduction of technologies and the latest scientific and empirical achievements in the science of forensic science, both in theory and in practice.

Regarding the origin, the genesis of the phenomenon of human trafficking and its scale, the research of A. Farrell and I. de Vries (2020). The authors note that the nature of this crime is hidden, which complicates the collection of accurate and comprehensive data on its prevalence and the number of cases of human trafficking for several reasons: corruption of the authorities, which causes some stages of this criminal activity, the revenge expected by victims from traffickers, lack of awareness of victims of legal protection, official employment, and rights guaranteed to employees.

In addition, the rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking is an essential aspect of the process of combating this criminal phenomenon, as it affects the educational function, which develops legal awareness and raises awareness of the risks of becoming a victim of labour, sexual and other exploitation. In this regard, it is advisable to pay attention to the work of K. Marburger and S. Pickover (2020), indicates that treatment of the traumatic experience of victims of human trafficking requires both psychologists and law enforcement agencies that interview such persons to obtain important data, to understand all levels of trauma that these persons may have experienced. These levels may relate to how the trafficking process occurred, including whether it happened within the country or by

transnational organisations, the gender of the victims, age, life circumstances and ethnicity. The results of the authors' work should be considered when developing the conclusion, and it should be added that among the criminal and forensic means of combating human trafficking and rehabilitation of victims of this activity, it is advisable to introduce expanded social and legal opportunities that will be enshrined in legislation and include rules for interviewing victims of human trafficking, free psychological support and counselling, opportunities for reintegration of victims into society, monitoring with using digital technologies to prevent the re-recruitment of these individuals into human trafficking.

The role of digital technologies in combating human trafficking is described in more detail in the work of S. Raets and J. Janssens (2021). The research indicates that technology allows law enforcement agencies and organisations to analyse huge amounts of data to identify trafficking trends, routes and hotspots. Using drones and biometric surveillance systems is useful for patrolling and guarding the border. Using blockchain technology can be used to track the transparency of the supply chain of products and goods, which can be useful when checking whether these products or services are the result of forced labour. The authors' findings are consistent with the results of this work, as technology is a powerful forensic tool in the fight against cross-border human trafficking. It is technology that can ensure the prompt exchange of information within the framework of international cooperation, faster identification of victims, and the detection of information traces of the crime.

In turn, H.J. Van Buren et al. (2021) explored the connection between business development and human trafficking. The work indicates that big business is partially responsible for the development of human trafficking, in particular, by establishing conditions that facilitate the emergence of opportunities and ways to develop processes related to this criminal activity. In addition, the authors cite data that suggests that human trafficking is the most profitable criminal activity. Although the authors' findings do not coincide with the results of this work, they are significant for consideration and conclusion. For example, large corporations often have extensive global supply chains. These supply chains can be vulnerable and susceptible to human trafficking when suppliers use forced or exploited labour. For example, companies may source products or raw materials from regions with weak labour rights protections, which can be exploited by transnational criminal organisations, such as the Xinjiang region of the People's Republic of China, which has a history of massive forced labour of Uighurs and other populations, amounting to modern-day slavery. Most of these people in the region are victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Considering the inaction of the authorities, the only way to change the situation of such a vulnerable group of people is through the

participation of international organisations and cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

A. Farrell and B. Kane (2020) examined the role of the criminal justice system in combating human trafficking. The authors identified the key functions and responsibilities of this system, which include investigation, collection of evidence, identification of victims, and traffickers, disclosure of transnational networks involved, and bringing charges. Therewith, the authors note that effective law enforcement is impossible without such additional elements as a clear and streamlined legal framework that meets all international standards for combating human trafficking, access to the latest tools and techniques for investigating and preventing this crime, collecting and analysing traces of the crime, including those related to digital technologies. The authors' results coincide with the results of this work and contain important recommendations for the effective functioning of the law enforcement system in the field of combating human trafficking.

J. Deeb-Swihart et al. (2022) explored the side effects of using technology, in particular artificial intelligence, namely – the ethical aspect. Among the biggest risks, the authors highlight the danger of data leakage on victims of human trafficking, loss of confidentiality and anonymity, problems with consent to using sensitive data, dignity issues, and consequences for human rights and freedoms in the event of information leakage due to a machine error. In addition, the authors emphasise the need to ensure the transparency of artificial intelligence systems involved in the process of investigating and monitoring human trafficking, in particular, trafficking committed by transnational organisations due to the increased social danger of such activities.

Conclusions

The research work allowed identifying and analysing important aspects related to human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups of its scale, the areas of optimisation of the mechanism for combating such criminal phenomena with the help of criminal law and forensic means, innovative technologies, including the response of international and national structures to solve important problems in this area of legal relations. The author examines the genesis and development of the phenomenon of human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups and notes that modern slavery is currently manifested in forced labour, sexual exploitation and prostitution. The author identifies the prerequisites that encourage people to accept dubious employment offers; such prerequisites include low living standards, gender inequality, unemployment, lack of legal awareness, and lack of education. In addition, the author examines the range of human and civil rights and freedoms that may be

violated as a result of human trafficking as a serious criminal act, including the right to life, health, education, freedom of movement and personal liberty, freedom from torture, and the right to dignity and honour. It is noted that the activities of transnational organisations involved in human trafficking are highly dangerous to society; their activities are difficult to track, which affects the level of trust in international and national law enforcement agencies. In addition, it is noted that human trafficking can be a side activity of such organised groups, the profits from which are invested in smuggling, arms sales, and drug trafficking. Among the additional dangers associated with transnational organised groups is their connection with governmental structures, which, due to corruption, can conceal and facilitate such criminal activities.

The work presents statistics from the International Labour Organisation, which indicate that the profits from human trafficking can reach \$150 billion annually. Among the regions where human trafficking is most prevalent, the research highlights Asia and Eastern Europe. In addition, special attention is paid to the research of foreign experience in combating transnational crime, which is manifested in the adoption of special conventions and protocols with criminal law recommendations for signatory countries to combat human trafficking, which is becoming “borderless”. In addition, the author analyses the positive experience of the EU and the United States; the author notes the significant role of specialised agencies authorised to investigate crimes related to human trafficking. The author emphasises the increased risks of human trafficking, which may become a victim of Ukrainian citizens due to a full-scale Russian invasion. The author points to several forensic, and criminal means and ways to combat this phenomenon and prevent its development. Among the areas of criminalistic support for combating such criminal activity, the most significant is the development and improvement of the forensic methodology for investigating human trafficking committed by transnational organised groups.

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