



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

Prot. No: 2024/HT/21

Date: November 5th, 2024

To:

H.E. Don Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo, Grand Chancellor
H.E. Fra' Alessandro de Franciscis, Grand Hospitaller
H.E. Ambassador Giampaolo Cantini, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann, Permanent Observer to the UN/OIs in Geneva
H.E. Ambassador Paul Beresford-Hill, Permanent Observer to the UN in New York
H.E. Sebastian Prinz von Schoenaich-Carolath, Ambassador to Austria
H.E. Ambassador Günther Granser, Permanent Observer to the UN/OIs in Vienna

Cc:

Ms. Cecilia Amendolea, Department for Foreign Affairs/Bureau for Multilateral and International Organisations
Mr. Emanuele G. A. Piluso, Attaché to the UN/OIs in Geneva and Advisor to the Ambassador

Subject: Report on the Launch of the OSCE – Bali Process Policy Brief on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence to Facilitate Trafficking in Persons held in Vienna on November 1st, 2024

Reference: /

Signature: Ambassador Michel Veuthey

Attachment(s): 1 (interventions)

Abstract:

The OSCE and the Bali Process Regional Support Office launched a [Policy Paper](#) in Vienna on November 1, 2024, from 9 to 12. This policy brief addressed the use of generative AI in human trafficking. It highlighted traffickers' use of AI to bypass cultural and language barriers, automate recruitment, and reach victims on a larger scale.

On a personal level, I think a more robust approach is needed to prevent and combat the use of AI in human trafficking in two ways:

- Utilizing all existing national, regional, and international human rights and refugee law instruments.
- Supporting the adoption of new instruments to control the development and use of AI so that fundamental human rights are respected.¹

¹ See "A.I. and Contemporary Slavery," a contribution to the Annual Meeting of the Association Internationale pour l'enseignement social chrétien (AIESC), Sainte Garde, 29 August 2024. Available online: <https://kdrive.infomaniak.com/app/share/111675/9f0ccc65-c1a9-4bf7-93ca-179dd97d2eaa>



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Text:

The OSCE and the Bali Process Regional Support Office launched a [Policy Brief](#)² in Vienna on November 1, 2024, from 9 to 12, addressing the use of generative AI in human trafficking. Participants, including key representatives from governments, the private sector, and international organizations, discussed how traffickers increasingly use AI to overcome language and cultural barriers, automate recruitment, and exploit vulnerable individuals on a larger scale. This event highlighted the need for enhanced collaboration, policies, and technological tools to counter these advanced trafficking tactics.

Dr. Kari Johnstone, *OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*, opened and concluded the conference. In her introduction, she underscored the dual-edged nature of technological progress, stating, “Every technological advance provides a new opportunity even for human trafficking.” Dr. Johnstone set the stage for the discussions that followed, highlighting the urgency of addressing AI's role in this global issue. She closed the conference by emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts among governments, private sector, and civil society to stay ahead of the evolving tactics used by traffickers in an increasingly digital world.

Furthermore, the conference convened experts to examine the implications of generative AI in facilitating human trafficking and the need for strategic collaboration across sectors:

Urvi Bhatt, *Counsellor (Home Affairs), Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva*

- Criminals are increasingly using AI to overcome language, culture, and other recurring barriers, allowing them to connect with a broader range of victims.
- This technology also provides traffickers with continuous, almost unlimited access to potential victims, amplifying the scale and reach of their operations.
- AI's ability to learn from past successes enables it to become more efficient, adapting to new circumstances with minimal human intervention.
- A collaborative effort is essential to address this rapidly evolving threat, with governments, private sectors, and organizations uniting to counter the misuse of AI.
- Investment in trafficking awareness, proactive policy development, and active partnerships with technology companies are crucial in combatting these AI-driven tactics.

Ryan Winch, *Transnational Crime & Technology Programme Manager, Regional Support Office, The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons & Related Transnational Crime*.

- The rise of cyber scam centers in Southeast Asia has fueled a dramatic increase in human trafficking, with technology playing a significant role in enabling these operations.
- Limited discussions around these technologies have allowed trafficking to flourish, particularly in cyber scam hubs where false job promises often lure individuals, trafficked through transit points, and subjected to abusive conditions to commit fraud.
- To address these challenges, the Bali Process, which includes 45 member states and NGOs like the ILO, IOM, and OSCE, is actively working from Bangkok to tackle physical trafficking and cyber scams. Their Regional Support Office (RSO) has a comprehensive plan focused on irregular migration, smuggling, transnational crime, capacity building, border management, and identifying vulnerable migrants.

² OSCE – REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE THE BALI PROCESS. *New Frontiers: The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence to Facilitate Trafficking in Persons. Policy Brief*. November 2024. 31 p. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/d/579715.pdf>



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- Hundreds of thousands of people have been trafficked into forced cyber scams, with entire cities being constructed to trap as many victims as possible. So far, at least 65 countries have dismantled illicit cyber centers, but cryptocurrency remains a vital tool for money laundering within these trafficking networks.
- Social media has become a primary channel for recruitment, often with insufficient response to remove these sources promptly. Better communication between police and social media platforms could help reduce recruitment efforts and phishing attacks.
- In addition to cyber scams, online gambling software and video gaming platforms are also being repurposed for trafficking and money laundering. The metaverse, blockchain games, and unregulated Telegram groups, some with over 20,000 members, are used for international crime and laundering due to their accessibility and lack of monitoring. These groups are also involved in the exchange of sensitive information, such as bank details, salary data, and scam scripts, which support trafficking operations.
- This issue extends beyond Southeast Asia, impacting regions such as Southern Africa, Peru, Georgia, and the UAE.
- Corruption in government policies continues to complicate the fight against these operations. In response, the RSO is implementing open-source training for law enforcement, collaborating with Interpol, and working with banks and NGOs. A toolkit for financial tracking, alongside research with Australia's anti-trafficking unit, is part of ongoing efforts to disrupt the financial infrastructure supporting trafficking.

Radu Cucos, *Technology and Trafficking in Human Beings Programme Lead, OSCE:*

- The misuse of technology in human trafficking is not a new phenomenon; it has gradually evolved, adapting to new technological advancements over time. The OSCE prioritizes developing responses to these changes by constantly monitoring trends at the platform level. They focus on leveraging positive technological developments, collaborating with the private sector, and offering guidance to mitigate trafficking risks.
- In the U.S., the website Backpage, initially used for hiring nannies, became a significant platform for trafficking, hosting over 70 million ads annually related to sexual exploitation, including human and child trafficking. To address these issues, the OSCE is working on mapping key platforms, conducting analysis of priority platforms, and launching proactive investigative cases.
- A recent study across 56 countries uncovered 4,189 websites linked to human trafficking, underscoring the importance of mapping hubs of sexual exploitation as a crucial next step in the OSCE's strategy to combat trafficking on digital platforms.

Phil Bennet, *Independent Technology Consultant:*

Human trafficking through technology can be examined from two perspectives: how traffickers have historically utilized technology and adapted to advancements and how rapid developments in AI, particularly with tools like transformers, have reshaped their strategies. Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPT), a notable example, has taken the world by surprise with its accessibility and minimal resource requirements, making sophisticated technology available to nearly anyone.

Governments and private sectors, especially in the UK, are investing hundreds of millions of British pounds into AI, but this technology also amplifies the reach and capacity of human traffickers. AI's ability to understand cultural nuances and language allows traffickers to target and recruit victims more precisely. It can automate interactions, enhancing traffickers' efficiency in contacting potential victims.

The automation of advertisements and publications is particularly concerning, as it can lead to "astroturfing"—creating a false perception of credibility through numerous fake personas. Deepfake media adds another layer of risk, enabling psychological manipulation through fabricated sexual imagery, fake identities, and counterfeit documents. This doesn't just make trafficking operations more efficient but can also drive-up demand for trafficked individuals. Implementing safeguards against these threats remains a complex challenge.