



## OVERVIEW

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## IN BRIEF

Human trafficking is most often the result of **compounding vulnerabilities** in an individual or family's life. And this present COVID-19 crisis is drastically increasing those risk factors. We already had a serious problem. It's about to get much bigger.

- **INCREASING RISK FACTORS**

- Domestic violence, isolation, child abuse, exploitation, unemployment, hunger, lack of healthcare, lack of access to services, poverty, and social marginalization are all vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit - and they **are all on the rise**.

- **ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

Individuals **seeking, creating, and accessing** child pornographic images and live-stream abuse videos has **increased dramatically** during this time. The commercial sexual exploitation of any minor in the United States (and of every individual, regardless of age, by force, fraud, or coercion) is by definition human trafficking. Even in the age of stay-at-home orders, these forms of exploitation are taking place, both in the US and abroad.

Additionally, with children and youth spending **more time online**, there is a much **greater risk** of their coming into contact with predators and traffickers.

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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## ● UNEMPLOYMENT

- As unemployment numbers continue to rise, this reality will force people take any job that is offered to survive, without regard to fair wages, safety, or other protective factors they would normally seek. Both **labor and sex traffickers** will exploit individuals in this desperate position - in the United States and everywhere else.

## ● IDENTIFICATION & PROTECTION OF VICTIMS

- The **closure and inaccessibility of services** normally available for those in urgent need due to stay-at-home orders, social distancing measures at shelters (which is limiting the number of individuals who can be served), and the decrease of donations for nonprofits who would normally be filling the gap but are now facing major gaps in their own financial ability to do so, will all negatively impact the identification of victims.

Further, survivors everywhere who often rely on community programs and services for ongoing support, are at a **higher risk of re-exploitation** when they are unable to receive needed assistance or lose their jobs.

[ABC News, FBI Task Force Focuses on Human Trafficking Amid Coronavirus](#)

[Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force, Responding During the COVID-19 Pandemic Info for Greater New Orleans Service Providers](#)

[Polaris, COVID-19 May Increase Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Communities](#)

[International Organization of Migration, COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #14: Human Trafficking](#)

[United Nations News, COVID-19 Putting Human Trafficking Victims at Risk of Further Exploitation, Experts Warn](#)

[United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, COVID-19 Urgent Need for Child Protective Services to Mitigate the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Worldwide](#)

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Earn your [Human Trafficking Awareness Badge](#) to be ready to identify and report trafficking
- Read the [Ways You Can Engage to Meet Needs During the Pandemic](#) blog
- Share this information with others

AFRJ