

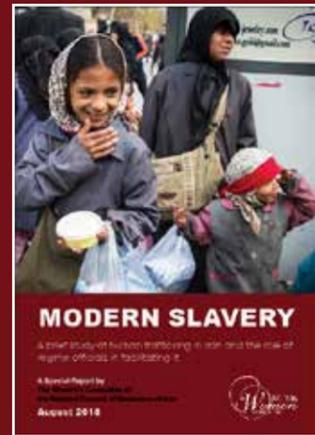


# MODERN SLAVERY

A brief study of human trafficking in Iran and the role of regime officials in facilitating it

**A Special Report by  
The Women's Committee of  
the National Council of Resisance of Iran  
August 2018**





## Modern Slavery

A brief study of human trafficking in Iran and the role of regime officials in facilitating it

A Special Report by the Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran  
August 2018

Copyright©2018 The Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

ISBN: 978-2-35822-000-2

 [women.ncr-iran.org](http://women.ncr-iran.org)  
 @womenncri  
 @womenncri

# MODERN SLAVERY

## A BRIEF STUDY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN IRAN AND THE ROLE OF REGIME OFFICIALS IN FACILITATING IT

THE FACTS AND FIGURES	2
WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY GANGS?	5
MEANS AND MECHANISMS OF ENSLAVING YOUNG WOMEN	6
ROLE OF OFFICIALS IN MODERN SLAVERY	8
LAW ENFORCEMENT AT THE SERVICE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKERS	9
INTERNATIONAL REPORTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN IRAN	10
THE FINAL WORD	12

**M**isogyny and rampant corruption are inextricably intertwined with the existence of the regime ruling Iran, victimizing women and girl children more than any other sector of Iranian society. One of the most tragic aspects of such gender discrimination and exploitation in Iran is the sprawling business of trafficking of young women and girls for modern slavery. The UN General Assembly defines human trafficking as, “illegal and confidential relocation of persons within the national borders, usually from developing countries and countries with instable economy in order to take sexual and economical advantage of women and girls for the profit of users, smugglers, criminal syndicates and other smuggling activities including forced housework, fabricate marriage and stepchildren and confidential employment.” Trafficking of young women and girls from Iran to other countries, particularly the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, is a common practice. This was publicly acknowledged in 2008 by Hassan Abbassi, one of the clerical regime’s main theoreticians.

Abbassi slammed the incumbent President Mohammad Khatami, the incumbent Minister of Intelligence Ali Younessi, the State Exigency Council, the IRGC (Revolutionary Guard Corps), the Bassij, the incumbent Chief Justice Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, as well as Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the incumbent commander of the State Security Force who is presently the Mayor of Tehran, for being irresponsible in not attending to the catastrophic slavery of young Iranian women and girls in Arab countries and taking no action to prevent it.

Hassan Abbassi said, “The situation of our Islamic government has reached the point where our Shiite girls are being auctioned in the (United Arab) Emirates.”

Obviously, there is a maximum lack of transparency on the part of the mullahs’ fundamentalist regime, particularly when it comes to the violations of women’s rights. The limited information available on this issue bespeak of a catastrophe of colossal dimensions.



## THE FACTS AND FIGURES

- ▶ In February 2003, it was revealed that the run-away women and girls, apprehended and ostensibly taken for rehabilitation to the Green House of Karaj, were being sold to trafficking gangs who took them abroad. The Green House of Karaj was tied to Judiciary officials and the State Security Force of Karaj and operated under their supervision. At the time, the state-run Hamshahri daily reported that girls between 8 and 12 years of age were being sold for 300-800 dollars each.
- ▶ In 2004, a state-backed NGO, the Organization

for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) reported that every month, 45 young Iranian women and girls between 16 and 26 were sold to rich people in Karachi, alone.

- ▶ On May 26, 2004, the semi-official Sharq daily wrote, “Today, a group of Iranian boys and girls are going to be auctioned in Fujairah, UAE.” The auction was prepared for since two weeks earlier during an International Exhibition in Tehran. Women hunters chose 54 out of the 286 Iranian girls lined up in the stall belonging to an Arab state to be sent to the Gulf countries and auctioned off.

After the news broke out, the mullahs’ incumbent President, Mohammad Khatami, came out with denials.

Several days later, however, Mostafa Bin Yahya, the pilot of UAE Airlines made revelations to the contrary, which ultimately led to his arrest. Bin Yahya who was himself from Iranian decent said, “Every day, nine regular flights and 20 special flights (each) transfer an average of 10 to 15 Iranian girls from Iran to Dubai. Most of these girls are from Abadan, Ahvaz, Zahedan, Tabriz and Kermanshah. The largest percentage of the girls come from Tehran and Mashhad.”

Bin Yahya added, "Every month the lifeless bodies of 3 to 5 deceased Iranian girls are returned home."

He also revealed that given the significance of the trafficking of young Iranian girls, a separate terminal had been officially allocated to the flights from Iran.

► In an internal factional feud in September 2004, mullah Keshani, member of the Central Council of the *Ansarallah* (vigilante gangs) and editor of *Yalessarat* publication, revealed, "Some corruption gangs... are affiliated with influential figures in the Islamic Republic. I am willing to prove this for anyone who wants. I can provide documents. In some cases, including the sale of girls to the Sheikdoms of Dubai, the agents involved are relatives of [Iranian] officials. They operate under complete immunity and with confidence that no agency would stop them. They receive between 12 to 15 million toumans at least for every Iranian girl they sell to the Arab Sheikhs."

► On October 4, 2005, the state-TV broadcast a news briefing by former speaker of the mullahs' parliament, Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel. A TV reporter asked him, "In the exhibition, you could see, and all of us witnessed, a phenomenon that previously used to be denied by officials, the phenomenon of deceiving girls and transferring them to the Gulf countries, or the phenomenon of foreign embassies taking advantage of Iranian girls, etc. Is it profitable or is it harmful to deny such things?" Haddad Adel replied, "Certainly, denying the truth is not the way to solve such problems. But there is a difference between denial of the truth and telling

the truth to people who do not need to know it." (The state-run Iranian TV, October 4, 2005)

► The state-run Jomhuri newspaper also published a report on February 5, 2008, on the new markets for human trafficking gangs affiliated with the Iranian regime. In a report entitled, "Iranian women in Chinese cabarets," Jomhuri wrote, "After the Sheikdoms in Dubai, now China has become the nest for the said people."

► In April 2009, Ham-Mihan website revealed that Iranian girls were auctioned in India with an income of 2 million toumans per night. The website also reported that Iranian girls were sold in Arab countries. Ham-Mihan added, "Iranian girls who are usually smuggled to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates are between 10 and 17." One of the victims told Ham-Mihan, "I became miserable in Dubai. Today, I have a terrible life. Many of my friends with whom we were in the auction together, have disappeared and are no longer alive."

► In October 2013, Mahmoud Sadeqi, Chief of the SSF Immigration and Passports Police, hinted that they "do not deny... (that) Iranian girls were smuggled to Arab countries." (The state-run Mehr news agency – December 2, 2103)

► According to the news made public in July 2017, a human trafficking gang had transferred more than 800 girls out of Iran for modern slavery. The ringleader of the gang was at large and on the run. ([negah.org](http://negah.org) website, July 4, 2017)



## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY GANGS?

**T**he statistics officially released by the National Welfare Organization in Tehran indicate that the number of runaway girls is on the rise in the Iranian capital. Every year, some 15 per cent of girls in the 14-18 age range run away from home. According to these statistics, during the time span from year 2000 until 2003, some 22,000 street children had been rounded up from across the capital, Tehran. These children are usually preyed upon by human trafficking gangs. Other statistics indicate that only 13 million of the 20 million kids eligible to enroll in elementary schools, are registered with the Ministry of Education. It is speculated that the remaining 7 million children become victims of human trafficking gangs and are engaged in modern slavery. Today, the average age of women who sleep in the streets on card-board boxes has dropped to 17 and they even include girls under 15. The latest figures indicate that between 3 to 7 million Iranian street children have been abandoned. (The state-run [Tasnim news agency](http://Tasnim news agency) – September 27, 2017)

In similar situations in other major capitals, particularly in Mashhad and Shiraz, abandoned children and youngsters are good preys to human and sex trafficking gangs. In September 2017, a woman guard in the Central Prison of a major capital, made disclosures about the bitter fate of runaway girls who end up in prisons. Speaking on condition of unanimity, she said, "Girls who get incarcerated several times, are good preys to smugglers since they have no one to support them. They are easily deceived by hollow promises of living in the West and leaving the country. Many young runaway girls easily fall into the trap of slavery gangs the first time they get arrested and ever before the court issues their decrees." The prison guard said failure to separate different categories of prisoners exacerbates the situation, and helps trafficking gangs identify and get in touch with their victims. She said, "Women who have spent long and upwards of 10 years in prison, have their own ties and contacts. They receive considerable sums of money which enables them to throw 'dinner parties' in the ward to attract young runaway girls



and easily hunt them. These girls are immediately turned over to human trafficking gangs. At the same time, influential prison officials give a free reign to the ringleaders of such gangs of corruption and prostitution. Time and again, I have personally witnessed that when several women with financial misdemeanors found out about these long-time prisoners' dealings and objected to them, they were badly dealt with and beaten up in coordination with the prison guards."

The female prison guard also disclosed that, "In some cases, these girls disappear after their first appearance in court. I have even witnessed that the presiding judge exonerates the girls and then takes them away with him, without anyone having any information on the fate of the girls."

Citing her colleagues in other major cities, this prison guard said that there is a similar situation in the central prisons of other cities. (The state-run [salamatnews.com](http://salamatnews.com), September 15, 2017)

**Traffickers identify these young women and girls usually among indigent families.**

**Then, they pose as rich suitors from Zahedan (capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province) who wish to marry their daughters.**

**After marrying the girls, they smuggle them to brothels in Quetta, Karachi, etc. Some of these women never arrive their destinations due to harsh transfer conditions. Their bodies are thrown into the sea.**



**A VICTIM IS HIDDEN IN THE DASH BOARD OF A CAR**  
Sometimes the victims die before arriving at the destination due to harsh conditions during transfer across the border

## MEANS AND MECHANISMS OF ENSLAVING YOUNG WOMEN



“In the impoverished regions of our country, like the southern Khorasan Province, many families push their daughters into this trap, thinking that their daughters are formally getting married,” said [Shahla Mo'azzami-pour](#), a professor at Tehran University.

“These are fabricate marriages after which the girls are sent to the Persian Gulf countries or Pakistan,” she added.

Mo'azzami-pour also spoke of job advertisements which are used by human trafficking gangs to hunt their victims. “There are ads behind which are other purposes, but some people with lack of awareness are deceived by them.”

According to Mo'azzami-pour, “Traffickers dupe young women and girls who are looking for a job; they hide the girls in the storage tank of a ship and smuggle them under horrible conditions. Occasionally, these women never arrive their destinations due to harsh transfer conditions. Sometimes, they are thrown into the sea.”

Taking away the victims' passports, imprisoning them at home and isolating them from the outside world, and adding to their debts, are some of the methods used to compel young women and girls into sex slavery. They work about 16 to 18 hours and are exposed to AIDs and other dangerous venereal diseases.

Another social expert, Sulmaz Sharif, pointed to the common practice of trafficking of women and girls in the provinces of Khorasan and Sistan and Baluchestan, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Sharif points out, “Traffickers identify these young women and girls usually among indigent families.

Then, they pose as rich suitors from Zahedan (capital of Sistan-o Baluchistan Province) who wish to marry their daughter. After marrying the girls, they smuggle them to brothels in Quetta, Karachi, etc.

According to her findings, the shanty towns around Mashhad (capital of Razavi Khorasan Province in northeastern Iran) are among the regions where this phenomenon (the trafficking of young women) is rampant.” ([Miyawali.com](#), September 12, 2011)

According to Sharif, the victims are smuggled in two ways. A number of them are formally wedded in exchange for a sum of money paid to their families and subsequently smuggled across the border.

There is another group of girls who are abducted or deceived by gang members and smuggled out of the country without their fathers' permission. In other instances, members of human trafficking gangs deceive rural families, particularly those who have someone sick suffering from incurable diseases. They dupe the father by telling him that his daughter would become independent, able to earn her own expenses and, in not a distant future, she would support them, too. In this way, they earn the father's permission to buy his daughter.

In the beginning, the victims are not aware that they are being smuggled. It is only a few days after their marriage that they are forced through intimidation or deception to move to the border region and subsequently leave the country. The girls have no way out of such conditions as they are guarded all the time just like a prisoner.

A 22-year-old victim of such crimes who had been forced to marry an Afghan trafficker and is presently a mother of four, says her brother-in-laws used to rape her in the absence of her husband and one of her children is from a brother-in-law. They had threatened to kill her if she said anything to her husband or anyone else!

The victims also include young, innocent children who are hidden in some place until they reach puberty. Then, they are offered for sale in the markets of India or the Middle East.

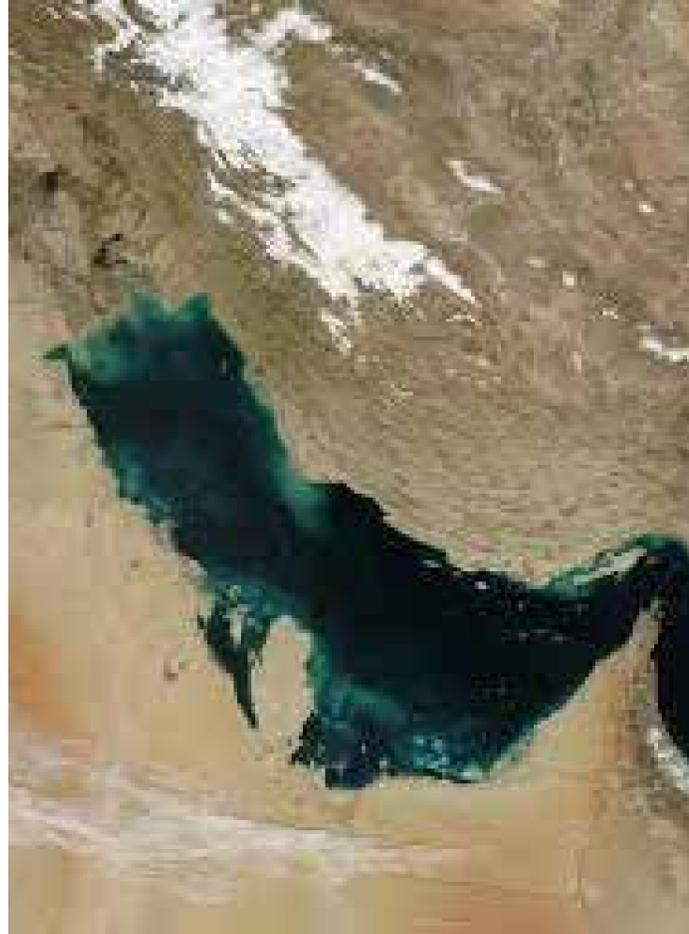
In countries like the UAE and Pakistan, the girls are sold in ceremonies called “Halfa” on the occasions of Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha. If a girl is not bought by any specific buyer, then she is forced into prostitution in clubs and cabarets.

Some [pictures](#) published in 2001 showed women thrown into the dash board of some cars and smuggled to countries such as Dubai.

Other reports indicate that women are detained in the trunk of a ship for up to several weeks en route to their destination. Other women are given false identity cards obtained by traffickers from the officials they are tied to. ([Negah.org](#) website, October 17, 2017)

Following are the [observations of a visitor to Dubai](#) about one of the victims of human trafficking.

“Many of the victims end up in a cheap hotel in one of the districts known as Dar ol-Mubarak. Most of these hotel owners are Iranians but they do not admit Iranian tourists. One day, I woke up early and went to the courtyard to do my morning exercise. There, I heard a woman sobbing. I went towards the sound and found a young woman. When she got up to get away from me, I noticed that a part of her white pants in the back was stained with infection and plasma. I asked her, ‘Have you been injured?’ But she was too nervous and filled with hate to reply. I waited until she calmed down a bit and then I asked, ‘What is this plasma?’ She explained, ‘The bastards did to me whatever they wanted to... They picked this place as an ashtray. Since last evening until just an hour ago, when I went unconscious, they extinguished their cigarettes on my body. When I came to, I found out that they had left without paying me.’ I asked, ‘Why don't you complain to the Police?’ She bitterly grinned, ‘What complaint? I have no passport. The police would send me back to Iran with the first canoe. What the hell can I do in Iran? Will my family take me back? Will anyone give me support?’ ”



## LAW ENFORCEMENT AT THE SERVICE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKERS

**T**he Iranian regime has been classified as a Tier 3 state that does not take any effective measures to prevent human trafficking or punish its perpetrators.

The limited facts available in this regard confirm the truth of this classification.

Citing a judiciary official, the state-run Iran daily reported on December 25, 2005, "Someone who earns at least 15 million from sale of every girl, is fined with only 300,000 toumans, and he is immediately released after paying the fine.

"Today, one of the major problems the human trafficking victims face in Iran is the due process and the various punishments which are applied also to the victims, because they get accused of running away from home, of engaging in illicit sexual relationships, and even of discrediting 'the sacred Islamic Republic' by dealing it a blow on the international level. The victims are thus punished, accordingly. This is why the victims of human trafficking do not even dare to fight for their basic human and legal rights." (The state-run [salamatnews.com](http://salamatnews.com), September 15, 2017)

Mir Mohammad Sadeqi, director of the Punishment and Criminology Group of Tehran's Beheshti University, said, "We face problems in defending women. In cases where women have taken action against sexual assault and reacted to the assailant, they received a Retribution sentence...

"Today, trafficking of women has turned into a billion-dollar business with huge profits. Sometimes, the women involved are clueless. Lacking awareness and deceived by various false promises, they fall into the traps set up by traffickers." ([farsi.alarabiya.net](http://farsi.alarabiya.net), October 19, 2016)

Iranian women (bottom) and children (middle) are smuggled to Arab countries in the Persian Gulf (top) to work as slaves.

## ROLE OF OFFICIALS IN MODERN SLAVERY

**I**n the course of factional feuds within the Iranian regime, it was revealed that the former commander of the State Security Force (SSF) in Tehran Province, Reza Zare'ii, had been involved in launching and running a brothel by recruiting runaway women and girls whom he was supposed to save.

The former SSF Commander Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam, however, intervened in the case to minimize its impact.

Zare'ii was released on bail shortly afterwards claiming lack of sufficient documents to incriminate him, while the rival faction's publications had reported of at least 80 plaintiffs and numerous incriminating audio and video recordings. (Radio Farda, August 20, 2004)

In Autumn 2006, the bureau chief of the International Police (the Interpol) in Iran asserted that by his estimates, thousands of Iranians were sold every year for commercial sex. He said the trafficking of young women and girls to neighboring countries is one of the most lucrative businesses in Iran carried out with the green light and complicity of the country's officials. He said government officials were personally involved in the purchase,

sale and sexual harassment of young women and girls. ([Miyana.com](http://Miyana.com) website, September 12, 2001) Another report in 2003 revealed that following the earthquake that struck the historical city of Bam (in Kerman Province, southern Iran), orphan girls were abducted and taken to a well-known market in Tehran and sold to Iranian and foreign merchants. (The state-run [Fars news agency](http://Fars news agency) – April 12, 2012)

On June 8, 2008, the Saudi Al-Malaf website published an article in which it cited a U.S. State Department report indicating that the Iranian regime tops the list of countries where human trafficking takes place.

Al-Malaf wrote, "The Islam propagated by Khomeini and his heirs, i.e. the Iranian regime's Islam, has revived the age of ignorance where human beings were bought and sold. The highest levels of Iran's ruling system are engaged in the business of human trafficking. Among them, one can point to Rafsanjani's son as one of the ringleaders."

Three days later, Abbas Palizdar, secretary of the Judiciary Inquiry and Review Committee in the parliament, confirmed that Mehdi Hashemi Rafsanjani was engaged in sex trafficking.



# INTERNATIONAL REPORTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN IRAN

The [Global Slavery Index 2018](#) has classified Iran among “the 10 countries with highest prevalence of modern slavery.” According to the Global Slavery Index 2018, Iran is also “the subject of various UN Security Council resolutions reflecting the severity and extremity of the situations there.”

The [U.S. State Department](#) has classified Iran’s ruling regime since 2006, in the third tier of countries involved in trafficking in persons. Tier 3 countries do not fully comply with the minimum standards, and are not making significant efforts to do so, as opposed to Tier 2 countries that are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with the standards.

According to the [U.S. State Department’s report on Trafficking In Person \(TIP\) 2016](#), “Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Accurate information on human trafficking in Iran is difficult to obtain... An increase in the transport of girls from and through Iran en route to other Gulf States for sexual exploitation has been reported from 2009-2015; during the reporting period, Iranian trafficking networks subjected Iranian girls to sex trafficking in brothels in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region... In Tehran, Tabriz, and Astara, the number of teenage girls exploited in sex trafficking



continues to increase.” The 2016 TIP notes, “Iranian courts accord legal testimony by women only half the weight accorded to the testimony by men, therefore restricting female trafficking victims’ access to justice. Moreover, female victims of sexual abuse, including sex trafficking victims, are subjected to prosecution for adultery, which is defined as sexual relations outside of marriage and is punishable by death. The government did not report statistics on investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of trafficking offenders. The government also did not report investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in trafficking offenses, despite reports that such complicity was widespread.” In another part, the 2016 TIP reads, “The Government of Iran does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. As in previous reporting periods, the government did not share information on its anti-trafficking efforts. Public information from NGOs, the media, international organizations, and other governments indicates the Iranian government is not taking significant steps to address its extensive trafficking problem, particularly with regard to the protection of trafficking victims.”

In its [2017 report of Trafficking In Persons](#), the U.S. Department

of State says, “The Government of Iran does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; therefore, Iran remained on Tier 3... Public information from NGOs, the media, and international organizations indicate the government did not take significant steps to address its extensive trafficking problem. Trafficking victims remained highly vulnerable to punishment, including death, for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking.” In another part, it wrote, “The government did not report statistics on investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of traffickers. There is no evidence the government held complicit officials accountable for trafficking offenses, despite widespread reports of Iranian officials alleged complicity in the coerced recruitment and use of Afghan men for combat. The government did not report providing anti-trafficking training to its officials.” The 2017 report continues, “The government reportedly continued to punish trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking, such as adultery, prostitution, and illegal immigration. The government did not distinguish between trafficking victims, those seeking refugee status, and undocumented immigrants, and held foreign trafficking victims in detention centers and jails pending deportation, where some experienced severe physical abuse that sometimes led to death.”

Under the section entitled, Trafficking Profile, [the 2018](#)

***Some Iranian women who seek employment to support their families in Iran, as well as young Iranian women and girls who run away from their homes, are vulnerable to sex trafficking. The use of ‘temporary’ or ‘short-term’ marriages, lasting from one hour to one week, for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, is reportedly widespread in Iran.***

- US TIP 2018

[TIP](#) wrote on Iran, “As reported over the past five years, Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Iranian women, boys, and girls are vulnerable to trafficking in Iran, Afghanistan, the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Europe. In 2016 and 2017, there was a reported increase in young Iranian women in prostitution in Dubai; some of these women are trafficking victims, experiencing confiscation of passports and threats of violence. Reports suggest that Iranian women are also vulnerable to sex trafficking in Turkey, particularly in Turkish cities close to the Iranian border. “Media reports from 2015 and 2016 noted Iranian girls were subjected to sex trafficking in brothels in the IKR, especially Sulaimaniya; in some cases, this

exploitation was facilitated by Iranian trafficking networks... “Some Iranian women who seek employment to support their families in Iran, as well as young Iranian women and girls who run away from their homes, are vulnerable to sex trafficking. The use of ‘temporary’ or ‘short-term’ marriages, lasting from one hour to one week, for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, is reportedly widespread in Iran. Reports suggest that police and other Iranian authorities, religious clerics, and parents of victims are allegedly involved in or turn a blind eye to sex trafficking crimes. According to a regional scholar, trafficking rings reportedly use Shiraz, Iran, as a transit point to bring ethnic Azeri girls from Azerbaijan to the UAE for commercial sexual exploitation.”

On the exploitation of children, including girl children, the 2018 TIP added, “Street children in Iran are highly vulnerable to trafficking. The number of children working in transport, garbage and waste disposal, brick factories, construction, and the carpet industry is reportedly increasing; these children may be exposed to harmful working conditions and some may be vulnerable to trafficking. Organized criminal groups kidnap or purchase and force Iranian and migrant children, especially undocumented Afghan children, to work as beggars and street vendors in cities, including Tehran. These children, who may be as young as three years old, are coerced through physical and sexual abuse and drug addiction. Reports indicate that some children are also used in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and smuggling of fuel and tobacco.”

# THE FINAL WORD

**N**ot only the Iranian regime does not take any significant or effective measures to confront the trafficking in persons, but it does facilitate the operations of human trafficking gangs since it profits greatly from sex slavery both domestically and abroad.

This report briefly touched on the involvement of officials in human trafficking abroad. But here is also an example of the regime's taking advantage of modern slavery for its political interests. On December 13, 2010, the Al-Arabiya.net published a report based on a document exposed by the WikiLeaks, indicating that the clerical regime uses temporary marriages as part of the reception given to Iraqi tribal leaders on their visits to Iran. According to this document, an Iraqi tribal sheikh told a US Embassy staff in Baghdad, "To boost its influence in Iraq, the government of Iran gives us women in temporary marriages in every short visit we have to Iran."

The sheikh continued, "After my first visit to Iran, I found out that all the sheikhs who had visited Iran had enjoyed temporary marriages."

There are also documentaries which show luxury brothels built by influential figures with ties to government officials.

Just as a healthy government is the best threat to human trafficking gangs, a corrupt government engulfed in theft and embezzlement is the best reinforcement and complicit to their operations.

The Iranian regime does not have any robust anti-trafficking



laws to criminalize all forms of human trafficking and grant tangible support for protection of the victims.

Iran is not a party to the 2000 UN TIP Protocol and the regime has not ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The unique feature of human trafficking in Iran is that the ruling regime is the first benefactor of this organized crime both politically and economically and, as such, the regime could not be expected to fight modern slavery. At the same time, the Iranian regime is the best contributor to modern slavery through its devastating policies that have ruined the country's economic foundations and industries, wasted its natural resources and wealth, ruined its environment, rivers and lakes, and squandered Iran's national wealth on wars in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, etc. and on export of terrorism and fundamentalism throughout the globe.

As the populace is becoming increasingly poor, it has to grapple with rampant

unemployment and high inflation. The plethora of restrictions on women and girls in family and society are also contributors to runaway women and girls who are the prime victims of human trafficking gangs.

As the world has seen since December 2017, the Iranian people have risen up and revolted against the ruling clerical regime in its entirety. Women have been at the forefront of these protests. International organizations advocating for women's rights and the agencies actively countering human trafficking must voice their concern for the victims of modern slavery institutionalized with the support of the ruling regime in Iran. The Iranian regime must be pressured to sign international conventions protecting the rights of women and girl children, as well as the protocols and conventions against human trafficking, including the 2000 UN Trafficking in Person Protocol and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.



**STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
IN IRAN**

# Modern Slavery

A brief study of human trafficking in Iran and the  
role of regime officials in facilitating it

A Special Report by  
the Women's Committee of  
the National Council of Resistance of Iran

**August 2018**

 [women.ncr-iran.org](http://women.ncr-iran.org)

 [@womenncri](https://twitter.com/womenncri)

 [@womenncri](https://www.facebook.com/womenncri)

