

JPIC: Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking

Sister Maryann Agnes Mueller, CSSF

The month of January is dedicated to raising awareness of human trafficking. It was not until the 2004 Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, people began to make a connection between the internal displacement of people because of environmental disasters and an increase in human trafficking. In the aftermath of the Tsunami that affected Indonesia, India, Burma, and Thailand, child protection agencies noticed an increase in child abductions for adoption or exploitation. Today the United Nations and those who work in the field recognize that human trafficking will increase by 20 to 30 percent during disasters. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) warns that the risk for human trafficking of women and children increases as families become separated during environmental disasters.

The relationship between climate-driven migration and human trafficking was brought to public attention by Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical, 'Laudato Si'. This relationship has since been substantiated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) which reports that both sudden-onset climate disasters such as a tsunami, and slow-onset climate disasters such as drought, lead to increased risks of trafficking.

Health, Education, Advocacy and Linkage (HEAL) and the Department of Health and Human Services offer a pre-recorded webinar on "*Identifying Risk Factors for Human Trafficking After Natural Disasters*" which may be accessed by clicking [here](#).

This information is from the *January 2021 Stop Trafficking Newsletter* published by US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. For more information on the intersection of human trafficking with climate change please click [here](#).