

What CGE does

As a Chapter 9 constitutional body, the CGE promotes, protects and monitors gender equality, including addressing gendered drivers and impacts of trafficking e.g., sexual exploitation, domestic servitude. We:

- Educate and raise awareness on TIP and GBVF
- Monitor and advise on laws, policies and implementation e.g., PACOTIP, SORMA, Children's Act
- Investigate gender-related rights violations and receive complaints on gender discrimination and related harms
- Work with Parliament, government, Chapter 9 peers and civil society to strengthen prevention and survivor-centred responses.

How you can help

- Verify jobs opportunities; be cautious of no-interview remote work with paid travel
- Protect IDs and make copies; share travel itineraries with trusted people
- Teach young people about online safety and grooming
- Report suspicious ads or recruiters; support survivors with non-judgmental, trauma-informed care
- Engage your workplace school faith group in awareness sessions—invite CGE.



Key references & further reading

- UNODC. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol)*, Article 3 – Definition. [UNODC](#)
- South Africa. *Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP)* – selected victim-protection provisions. [Government of South Africa](#)
- Department of Justice & Constitutional Development. *Constitution, Chapter 9 – Commission for Gender Equality, Section 187*. Justice
- CGE. *The Role of the CGE (mandate overview and contacts)*. [cge.org.za](#)
- National Policy Framework on Trafficking in Persons (2019) - coordination of SA's response.
- GBV Command Centre DSD – services and access channels. [Victim Empowerment Programme Government of South Africa](#)
- SA National Human Trafficking Hotline – reporting portal and number 0800 222 777. [0800222777.org.za](#)
- SAPS – Crime Stop 08600 10111 emergency 10111. South African Police Service+1
- Children's Act 38 of 2005 – Section 110 mandatory reporting (professionals). [Law Library](#)
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act – Section 54 duty to report sexual offences against children. [Justice](#)
- UNODC. *Human Trafficking Indicators* (practical red flags). [UNODC+1](#)
- UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024* (global trends). [UNODC](#)

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Trafficking in Persons (TiP)

A crime.

A human-rights violation.

A gendered harm.

What is trafficking in persons? (TiP)

Trafficking in persons refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals through means such as threats, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or payments made to someone who has control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation may include sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.

In the case of children (under 18 years of age), any recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt for the purpose of exploitation is considered trafficking, even if none of the above “means” are used.

In South Africa, TIP is criminalised by the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 (PACOTIP), which also provides for victim protection, prevention, and prosecution.

How it happens

Traffickers commonly use:

- False job offers, bogus modelling or hospitality “recruiters”, study and travel scams
- Promises of love/ “boyfriend” method, gifts, debt-bondage
- Family/friend involvement, or abduction in fewer cases
- Online grooming, messaging apps, and social media ads
- Recent hotline trends include South Africans lured to “telesales/data-capturing” jobs in Southeast Asia, then forced into labour. (Be cautious of WhatsApp-only “interviews” and paid travel).

Forms of exploitation

- Sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, sexual servitude
- Forced labour in agriculture, domestic work, hospitality, construction, mining, and informal trade
- Forced criminality, forced begging, servitude, organ removal
(Recognised in international and South African law.)

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be targeted; **women and children** face heightened risk due to gender inequality, poverty, unemployment, migration, and GBVF. Trafficking occurs both within South Africa and across international borders. (See UNODC global assessments and SA’s national framework.)

Red flags (indicators)

Be alert when a person:

- Cannot freely leave their work/living situation; is closely monitored by someone else
- Has no control of ID/passport/phone/money; owes a debt they can’t explain
- Shows signs of fear, anxiety, injuries, sleep deprivation; scripted/inconsistent stories
- Works excessively for little/no pay; lives/works at the same site; isolated from community
(Indicators adapted from UNODC.)

Your rights & protections (PACOTIP)

Victims / survivors of trafficking in South Africa have the right to:

- Protection of identity and privacy in proceedings
- Access to health care, psychosocial support and safe accommodation
- Appropriate services irrespective of nationality; informed consent for services
- Consideration by prosecutors regarding public interest and the impact of trauma when deciding on prosecutions for status-related or minor offences linked to being trafficked
(See PACOTIP provisions on victim services, healthcare for foreign victims, confidentiality and prosecutorial discretion.)

The law and duty to report (children & other vulnerable persons)

- Children’s Act 38 of 2005: certain professionals must report on reasonable grounds suspected child abuse/neglect to DSD, a designated child-protection organisation, or SAPS. Good-faith reporters are protected.
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act (SORMA) states that if a sexual offence has been committed against a child, it must be reported to SAPS immediately. Failure to report is a criminal offence.

If you suspect a child is being trafficked or sexually exploited, report immediately. Your action can save a life.

How to report safely (24/7)

- SAPS Emergency: 10111 immediate danger
- SAPS Crime Stop anonymous tips : 08600 10111
- SA National Human Trafficking Hotline: 0800 222 777 operated with partners; connects to SAPS and services
- GBV Command Centre Department of Social Development : 0800 428 428 | USSD 1207867# | Skype: HelpMe GBV for Deaf community
- Childline South Africa for children & caregivers : 116 free from all networks

When you call

Share what you saw, where when, descriptions vehicle phone numbers, online ads screenshots, and whether someone is in immediate danger. Do not confront traffickers or attempt a rescue yourself.

