



General Assembly: Legal Policies On Human Trafficking

Chairs: Sydney Keeley, Mia Hall, & Casey Potash
s.keeley28@holychildrye.org

Committee: Legal Policies on Human Trafficking

Topic: Prostitution - Abolitionism vs. Decriminalization

Committee Description:

The committee will examine the legal policy approaches governments should take toward prostitution and the commercial sex industry, with particular attention to the relationship between prostitution, human trafficking, exploitation, and individual rights. Delegates will debate two major approaches: abolitionism, which seeks to reduce or eliminate prostitution as an institution, and decriminalization, which distinguishes consensual adult sex work from trafficking, coercion, and exploitation.

The committee will consider how different legal frameworks affect human trafficking prevention, victim protection, public safety, access to healthcare, and individual autonomy. Delegates will also examine whether international organizations should promote a common legal framework or allow individual countries to develop policies based on their own social, economic, and legal circumstances.

Background Information:

According to the International Justice Mission, millions of people (particularly women and girls) are trafficked for commercial sex every year. Nearly 1.7 million of those people are children, both male and female. Commercial sex traffickers target vulnerable people, particularly those in desperate economic circumstances, and trap them in inescapable cycles of violence and abuse. Globally, the IJM estimates that the human trafficking industry generates around \$325 billion per year—75% of which comes from commercial sex exploitation.

Abolitionism and decriminalization represent two competing approaches to how governments should address prostitution and the commercial sex industry. While both approaches can aim to reduce exploitation and protect vulnerable individuals, they differ significantly in how they view the existence of sex industry and the role of government regulation.

Abolitionism generally seeks to eliminate prostitution as an institution rather than recognize it as a form of labor. Modern abolitionist approaches often focus on reducing or eliminating demand for paid sexual services while providing support for individuals who wish to leave prostitution. Some governments have adopted versions of the Nordic Model, which criminalizes the purchase of sexual services while removing or reducing criminal penalties for people who sell them.

Decriminalization takes a different approach by removing criminal penalties for consensual adult sex work while continuing to criminalize trafficking, coercion, and exploitation. Supporters argue that criminalization can push sex workers into unsafe environments and make it harder to report violence or seek healthcare and legal protection.

The debate therefore focuses on whether governments should attempt to reduce prostitution itself or distinguish consensual adult sex work from exploitation and focus criminal enforcement on trafficking and abuse.

Current Situation:

Governments around the world have adopted different approaches to prostitution. Some criminalize both buying and selling sexual services, while others focus criminal penalties on buyers or remove criminal penalties for consensual adult sex work.

There is no international consensus on which approach is most effective at reducing trafficking, protecting vulnerable individuals, or preventing exploitation. The effects of different policies can also depend on law enforcement, social services, economic conditions, and access to healthcare and legal assistance.

The international community must therefore consider how governments can protect individuals from trafficking and exploitation while also addressing personal autonomy, public safety, human rights, and access to essential services.

Questions to Consider:

- Should governments attempt to eliminate prostitution or distinguish consensual sex work from exploitation?
- Does reducing demand help reduce trafficking?
- Does criminalization make it harder for victims to report abuse?
- What services should governments provide to people leaving prostitution?
- Should the UN encourage a particular legal framework, or should individual countries decide?
- How can governments prevent trafficking under either system?

Delegate Positions

United States: The United States has strict laws against human trafficking, although laws and enforcement differ across states and local governments. How should the United States address the relationship between prostitution, personal freedom, and the risk of exploitation?

Brazil: Brazil has national laws addressing human trafficking and the exploitation of people in prostitution, with particular attention to protecting victims. What role should victim protection and social services play alongside criminal enforcement?

Germany: Germany has developed a regulated legal framework for prostitution while maintaining laws against trafficking and exploitation. What protections should be used to prevent legal commercial sex from becoming a setting for exploitation?

France: France has adopted policies that focus on reducing the demand for paid sexual services while providing support for people seeking to leave prostitution. How should France determine whether reducing demand is an effective tool against trafficking?

New Zealand: New Zealand's Prostitution Reform Act established a framework focused on human rights, health and safety, and protection from exploitation. What lessons, if any, should other countries take from New Zealand's experience?

Spain: Spain has a complex legal situation surrounding prostitution, with national laws addressing trafficking and exploitation while regulation can differ in practice. Should international policy focus on creating a common legal standard or allow countries to develop their own approaches?

Iceland: Iceland has taken steps to reduce the demand for commercial sex while maintaining strong laws against human trafficking and exploitation. How should Ireland evaluate whether its approach is effectively reducing exploitation and protecting vulnerable individuals?

Argentina: Argentina has legislation specifically focused on preventing and punishing human trafficking and assisting its victims, including sexual exploitation. How can Argentina strengthen its response to trafficking without treating all forms of prostitution as trafficking?

Ireland: Ireland has reformed its laws surrounding prostitution while placing significant emphasis on combating trafficking and exploitation. How should Ireland measure whether its current approach is protecting vulnerable people?

Sweden: Sweden has placed a significant attention on human trafficking, exploitation, and the protection of vulnerable individuals. What approach should Sweden support to address prostitution while reducing trafficking and exploitation?

Mexico: Mexico has national legislation addressing human trafficking and sexual exploitation, while prostitution and its enforcement can vary across different parts of the country. How can Mexico improve cooperation between national and local authorities in combating trafficking?

Thailand: Thailand has a significant focus on combating human trafficking and exploitation, particularly because of concerns surrounding vulnerable populations and the commercial sex industry. What combination of law enforcement, prevention, and economic support could most effectively reduce trafficking?



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Committee: Legal Policies on Human Trafficking

Topic: Labor Exploitation

Committee Description:

The committee will examine the legal and international policies governments should use to prevent labor exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking. Delegates will consider how workers can be protected from threats, coercion, debt, unsafe working conditions, and other forms of exploitation.

The committee will focus particularly on vulnerable workers, including migrants, temporary workers, and people employed in industries such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mining, and hospitality. Delegates will debate the responsibilities of governments, businesses, and international organizations in preventing exploitation and protecting workers.

The committee will also consider how governments can identify labor exploitation before it develops into human trafficking, hold companies responsible for exploitation within their supply chains, and create safe systems for workers to report abuse.

Background Information:

Labor exploitation happens when workers are treated unfairly or forced to work through threats, debt, coercion, or abuse of their vulnerable situation. It can occur in many industries, including agriculture, construction, factories, mining, and hospitality.

Forced labor and human trafficking are closely connected, but they are not exactly the same. The International Labour Organization defines forced labor as work that a person is forced to perform under the threat of a penalty and has not freely agreed to. Human trafficking can involve recruiting, transporting, or receiving people through force, fraud, or abuse of vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation.

Migrant workers can face a higher risk of exploitation, especially when recruiters charge large fees, employers control important documents, or workers fear reporting abuse because of their

immigration status. Warning signs of forced labor can include deception about employment, restrictions on movement, withheld wages, threats, debt, and abusive working conditions.

Labor exploitation can also occur within global supply chains. A company may not directly employ an exploited worker but may still receive products or services from suppliers that use forced labor. This makes it difficult for governments and companies to identify exploitation and determine who should be held responsible.

Current Situation:

Labor exploitation is a global issue that affects both developing and developed countries. It can occur within a single country or across international borders, making cooperation between governments important.

Global supply chains make labor exploitation particularly difficult to monitor. Products can pass through multiple companies and countries before reaching consumers, making it difficult to determine whether forced labor was involved in their production.

Governments have increasingly considered measures such as stronger workplace inspections, supply-chain transparency requirements, and restrictions on goods produced using forced labor. However, enforcement remains difficult, especially when workers are afraid to report abuse or depend on their employers for housing, transportation, income, or immigration-related support.

The international community must therefore consider how governments can prevent labor exploitation while protecting workers, holding businesses accountable, and maintaining effective international trade.

Questions to Consider:

- How can governments identify labor exploitation before it becomes human trafficking?
- How should countries protect migrant and temporary workers?
- Should countries ban or restrict imports made using forced labor?
- How should companies be held responsible for exploitation within their supply chains?
- Should companies be required to prove that their suppliers do not use forced labor?

- How can workers safely report exploitation without fear of losing their jobs or immigration status?
- What role should international organizations play in preventing labor exploitation?
- How can governments balance stronger labor protections with international trade?

Delegate Positions:

United States: The United States has laws prohibiting forced labor and human trafficking and has used trade restrictions to prevent goods made with forced labor from entering the country. How should the United States strengthen supply-chain accountability while protecting workers and maintaining international trade?

Brazil: Brazil has taken steps to combat forced labor, particularly in industries such as agriculture and rural labor. How can Brazil strengthen workplace inspections and protect workers from exploitation?

Germany: Germany has introduced requirements for larger companies to examine human rights risks within their supply chains. How should Germany balance corporate responsibility with the costs of supply-chain monitoring?

France: France has developed policies requiring certain large companies to identify and address human rights risks within their business activities and supply chains. Should similar requirements apply to more companies internationally?

New Zealand: New Zealand has focused on strengthening protections against modern slavery and exploitation within supply chains. What policies should New Zealand support to improve supply-chain transparency?

Spain: Spain has laws addressing trafficking and forced labor while working within the European Union's broader labor and human-rights framework. How can Spain strengthen protections for migrant and vulnerable workers?

Iceland: Iceland has strong labor protections and cooperation between government institutions and workers. What additional measures should Iceland support to prevent labor exploitation in industries that rely on migrant workers?

Argentina: Argentina has laws addressing human trafficking and forced labor and has worked to protect vulnerable workers. How can Argentina improve identification and support for victims of labor exploitation?

Ireland: Ireland has taken steps to address human trafficking and forced labor while strengthening protections for vulnerable workers. How should Ireland improve cooperation between government agencies and businesses?

Sweden: Sweden places significant emphasis on worker protections and combating human trafficking. What role should stronger labor regulations play in preventing exploitation?

Mexico: Mexico has a large migrant and manufacturing workforce and faces challenges involving labor rights and exploitation. How can Mexico strengthen protections for workers while supporting economic growth and international trade?

Thailand: Thailand has focused on combating trafficking and exploitation, particularly among migrant workers in industries such as fishing, agriculture, and manufacturing. How can Thailand improve worker protections while reducing exploitation in vulnerable industries?