



**Forum:** General Assembly 4<sup>th</sup> Committee  
**Issue:** The growing exploitation in East-Africa  
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## Introduction

The international community has become increasingly concerned over the growing exploitation in East Africa. Exploitation was often due to human trafficking and forced labour. Over the past decade, human trafficking in East Africa become worse over time. It is commonly understood that human trafficking remained a huge problem due to its enticing high profit, poverty, and lack of regulations and law enforcement. Forced labour also remained a huge problem in Africa, specifically child labour. (“Illicit Trafficking and Eastern Africa.” )

## Definition of Key Terms

### [East Africa]

According to the scheme of geographic regions of the United Nations Statistics Division, Eastern Africa includes 20 nations of the African continent. They are Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, united republic OF Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. (“Methodology”)

### [exploitation]

Exploitation is the act of treating natural persons unfairly to benefit from their work. The types of common exploitation result from human trafficking include forced begging, criminality, prostitution, marriage and organ removal, as well as domestic servitude. (“What is Human Trafficking? “)

### [human trafficking]

Human trafficking is a process of enslaving people to acquire forced labour, such as sexual slavery, by recruiting, harbouring, and transporting them against their will using violence. (“What is Human Trafficking? “)

### [slavery]

The state of a person being another person’s personal property. (“Slavery Definition”)



## General Overview

### Historical background: transatlantic slave trade/the Triangular trade

Exploitation was not a new issue in Africa. African nations have struggled from the transatlantic slave trade long since its colonial period, where African people are excessively enslaved and the strong working forces are exported for high profit. (Sherwood) It was estimated that a total of 10 million to 12 million Africans was enslaved by Americans through the course of the 16th century to the 19th century via the transatlantic slave trade. Many entrepreneurs from Europe were also involved in the trade. Since the 15th century, ships from countries such as Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands landed on the African continent for the slave trade. Through the process, the slaves suffered from inhumane treatment, unhygienic living conditions, and severe infectious diseases. Such exploitation resulted in general fear across the African continent and rapidly devastated the economy of almost all African nations. There was a general understanding of lawlessness, and nations were unable to continue their agricultural and economic development. (Lewis) Such a historical past established a foundation for the problematic present and the huge underground market for forced labour. Many more issues evolved, especially exploitation from human trafficking.

### Current situation in Eastern Africa

Out of all forms of exploitation mentioned previously, the most common ones in Eastern Africa are sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. Furthermore, it appeared that more than 50% of the victims are children. (UNODC) Due to several reasons, children were forced into labour or prostitution, including poverty, lack of trafficking controls, and corruption of law enforcement. (The reasons will be specifically discussed in the next section) Although nations in Eastern Africa have made attempts to resolve the issue, the result was not so successful. Over the years, there was a tendency of increasing exploitation in the region, which appeared to be the total opposite of the development trends in other regions around the world. Although many organisations, including the United Nations, have been closely observing and offering solutions on the issue, there still seems to be a long way to go.

### Key causes of the growing exploitation

#### 1. Poverty

Most countries in the region of Eastern Africa are Least Developed Countries (LDCS), which was determined by the United Nations based on the level of socioeconomic development and the Human Development Index. Therefore, the living standard of many households is extremely low, resulting in poverty and hunger. To sustain the family and basic needs, many people were forced to participate in labour activities that were highly risky of exploitation. Although poverty might not be the cause of increasing exploitation in recent years, it is one of the underlying factors of exploitation in Eastern Africa for the past decades.



## 2. Lack of trafficking controls

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), one of the underlying factors for increasing human trafficking in Eastern Africa is the lack of trafficking controls. Due to the low police-inhabitant ratio, it was hard for the police force of the nations to work effectively on trafficking control. Together with the complex and interconnected locations of criminal areas, the issue became difficult to resolve. There was a lack of targeted intervention policies on the matter, and Eastern African nations need help from the international community. It was not only a domestic or inter-commitment issue, but many severe cases were international. (UNDOC)

### **Modern slavery and human trafficking in Eastern Africa**

Although it was said that more than half of the victims of exploitation in Africa are children, there was also a significant number of adults who suffered from forced labour due to the same reasons mentioned above.

It is hard to draw a clear line between human trafficking in different regions of Africa since it was a severe issue across the continent. Africa remains a region with the largest number of modern slavery. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons by UNODC in 2018, the detected victims of human trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa were transferred into different places around the world. Out of which, 20% flowed to western and southern Europe, 11% flowed to North Africa and the Middle East, and the rest flowed to North America East Asia and the Pacific, as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Besides, the cross-border flow of victims from West Africa to East Africa is also worth noticing. (16)

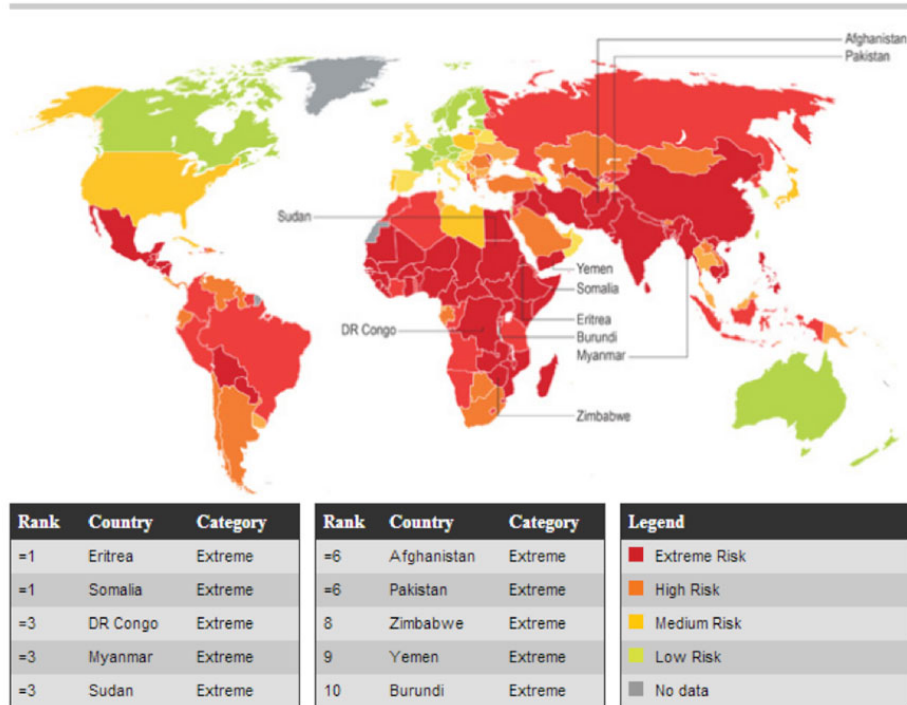
### **Sexual exploitation in Eastern Africa**

Children in Eastern Africa are extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Besides, due to the underdeveloped economy of the nations, many poor families could not live upon what they have. The difficult economic situation also forced many children to go to the urban areas for money and was falsely guided by the recruiters. Although many Eastern African nations have regulations that forbid sexual exploitation, due to the corruption of law enforcement, there was a lack of real practice. As a result of forced prostitution, children were heavily traumatised and suffer long term mental consequences. Besides, they could also be physically affected, such as infected by HIV. (“Sexual Exploitation of Children in East Africa.”)



## Labour exploitation in Eastern Africa

Child Labour Index map 2014



“Child Labor Index Map 2014.” *Educate a Child*, 2014, [educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/poverty/child-labor](http://educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/poverty/child-labor). Accessed 11 Jan. 2020

Many child labours in Eastern Africa work long hours, some work over 16 hours a day, even longer than adults in many other countries. They also receive little or no pay for their work. It has severely affected their education, and thus had a huge negative impact on their future. It is also worth mentioning that many children were recruited in the mining sector to take up risky jobs. The workload is extremely heavy, and the working condition is tough and abusive. Many children suffered from toxic substances in the mines and severe health issues. Although in some countries, children are protected by law, many still chose to become labour because of poverty. (“Child Labour in East Africa.”)

## Major Parties Involved

### [Non-governmental Organisations]

#### INTERPOL The International Criminal Police Organisation

INTERPOL has established the International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database, an intelligence and investigative tool which stores more than 1.5 million images and videos. It has facilitated the identification of around 20000 child victims worldwide who suffered from sexual exploitation. (“International Child



Sexual Exploitation Database.” ) In 2019, Kenya became the first African country to collaborate with INTERPOL’s ICSE database. With the help of the ICSE, specialised officers in Kenya were able to receive valuable materials and training sessions from INTERPOL on how to access and effectively utilise the ICSE database to protect children within its borders and abroad. (INTERPOL)

### **ECPAT International**

INTERPOL and ECPAT have collaborated extensively on the matter of sexual exploitation and published a joint report *Towards a Global Indicator on Unidentified Victims in Child Sexual Exploitation Material*, which specifically targeted on methods of identifying victims of child sexual exploitation. Besides, ECPAT has closely scrutinised the situation in Eastern Africa in many years and published many thorough regional reports on the matter. (“Resources Archive.” )

## **[Countries ]**

### **Eastern African Nations**

Since sexual exploitation was a rapidly worsening issue in many nations in Eastern African, it is hard to pinpoint certain countries and compare the severity among the nations. It was reported and studied by the African Child Policy Forum that different forms of sexual exploitation were happening every day among the nations. In Egypt, tourism marriage was especially concerning. The marriage between young African girls and male tourists became increasingly common among poor families. In countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, it was reported that around 22%-38% of the girls and 9%-17% of the boys experienced sexual exploitation to some degree. (Mohamed)

Regarding child labour, in opposition to the rest of the world, the percentage of child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced growth from 2012 to 2016, from 21.4% to 22.4%. 85% of a total of 72.1 million African child labours worked in the agricultural sector. Subsequently, many African nations adopted National Action Plans to eliminate the growth of child labour. However, despite all the effort, it remained one of the most serious issues in Africa. According to a statistical analysis of the African Union in 2016, around 20% of African children experienced child labour. Out of the 20% of children, 9% of them were part of hazardous sectors, such as mining. (“African Union Action Plan towards Eradication of Child Labour and Modern Slavery on the Continent.” )

## **Previous attempts to solve the issue**

In response to the issue at hand, many Eastern African nations have ratified the following conventions:



The *Slavery Convention* of 1926, The International Forced Labour Conventions of 1930, The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, The *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, The Slave Trade and Institutions and practices Similar to Slavery* of 1956, Abolition of Forced Labour Convention of 1957, The *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999, The Palermo Protocols of 2000 and The *Supplementing the Convention on Trans-national Organised Crime* of United Nations in 2002.

Although some nations have adopted the conventions, the operational effort put into place by each nation varies significantly. For instance, the Zambian government launched The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) which promotes domestic non-exploitative employment with a strong focus on children. It was also a program that supports the elimination of child labour with the priority of suspending the worst form. Furthermore, the Ethiopian government established the National Anti-Trafficking Council under the command of the Deputy Prime Minister. (UNODC)

There was also some regional cooperation between nations in Eastern Africa. For instance, the African Union Department of Social Affairs launched the *African Union Commission Initiative against human trafficking* and subsequently organised workshops for plan implementation. At an international level, African nations have also worked in cooperation with the European Union via the *Partnership on Migration, Mobility, and Employment action plan*. The ultimate goal of the action plan was to strengthen the institutional capacity of African nations, effectively prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking, and increase protection towards forced labourers. Such an action plan also provided funding to anti-trafficking agencies in Africa.

## Possible solutions

### [Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation]

As mentioned before, there regional and international cooperation in place were not very successful as the figure of exploitation in Eastern Africa continues to grow. Therefore, there was a stronger need for multilateral cooperation to combat the issue. The enforcement and trafficking control should be reinforced or upgraded to effectively eliminate the flow of forced labourers. Besides, there is a lack of effective governmental regulations among the nations, and many of the nations were economically underdeveloped. Therefore, it is important to seek help from the international community, which could be budgetary, technologically wise, etc. Furthermore, working in collaboration with the NGOs and receiving advanced training on effective management of the issue could all be potentially beneficial. In recent years, there is increasing cooperation between Eastern African nations and other nations as well



as tribunals of the United Nations. However, there is a need for more and closer cooperation, as the UNODC proposed in its discussion paper: organised Crime and Trafficking in Eastern Africa. (UNDOC) In terms of how to effectively strengthen the cooperation and achieve a sound result, it is left to fellow delegates to consider based on current situations.

Anti-forced labours and human trafficking programmes of non-governmental organisations also played an important role in resolving the issue at hand. The International Labour Organisation launched the LUTRENA programme in 2001, which stands for The Programme to Combat the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa. (ILO) It covers countries in West and Central Africa, but Eastern Africa was not on the list. Therefore, it is possible to strengthen such a programme by upgrading the goals and solutions based on the current situation and include more nations of Africa to truly combat the problem. Besides, training from countries who are experts in border control should also be introduced to Eastern Africa, as the flow of victims across borders has contributed to the severity of exploitation in Africa.

## Useful documents

Discussion Paper of The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organised Crime and Trafficking in Eastern Africa: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/easternafrika/regional-ministerial-meeting/Organised Crime and Trafficking in Eastern Africa Discussion Paper.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/easternafrika/regional-ministerial-meeting/Organised_Crime_and_Trafficking_in_Eastern_Africa_Discussion_Paper.pdf)

INTERPOL and ECPAT join report Towards a Global Indicator on Unidentified Victims in Child Sexual Exploitation Material, published in 2018: <https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/TOWARDS-A-GLOBAL-INDICATOR-ON-UNIDENTIFIED-VICTIMS-IN-CHILD-SEXUAL-EXPLOITATION-MATERIAL-Summary-Report.pdf>

Resolution 2722 of the United Nations Security Council on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, adopted on 11 March 2016: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2272\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2272(2016))

Resolution 278 of the United Nations General assembly on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, adopted on 20 March 2017: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/278>



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