



Recommendations for Combatting Human Trafficking on Railways

July 2026



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About

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The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the five United Nations regional commissions, administered by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1947 with the mandate to help rebuild post-war Europe, develop economic activity and strengthen economic relations among European countries, and between Europe and the rest of the world. During the Twentieth Century, UNECE served as a unique forum for economic dialogue and cooperation between East and West. Despite the complexity of this period, significant achievements were made, with consensus reached on numerous harmonization and standardization agreements. Since the early 1990s the organization has focused on assisting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia with their transition process and their integration into the global economy.

Today, UNECE supports its 56 member States in Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and North America in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. UNECE provides a multilateral platform for policy dialogue, the development of international legal instruments, norms and standards, the exchange of best practices and economic and technical expertise, as well as technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition. The norms, standards and conventions developed at UNECE in the areas of environment, transport, trade, statistics, energy, forestry, housing, and land management, innovation or population, offer practical tools to improve people's daily lives.

Many are used worldwide, and a number of countries from outside the region participate in the work of UNECE. UNECE's multisectoral approach helps countries to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable development in an integrated manner, with a transboundary focus that helps devise solutions to shared challenges. With its unique convening power, UNECE fosters cooperation among all stakeholders at the country and regional levels.

In the field of transport, UNECE serves as an intergovernmental forum where policymakers, international organisations, and stakeholders work jointly to improve safety, security, sustainability and efficiency. Through its long-standing work on promoting safe and sustainable transportation, UNECE has developed the regulatory framework for the railways for both passengers and freight movements through Conventions and Legal Agreements aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the railways. It engages with partners to address cross border challenges such as human trafficking, recognising the critical role of the rail sector in prevention, detection, and coordinated response. With its unique convening power, UNECE fosters cooperation among all stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels.



International Union of Railways (UIC)

UIC is the worldwide organisation for the promotion of rail transport at a global level and collaborative development of the railway system. Founded in Paris in 1922, it counts 218 members (116 in Europe) from all five continents, among them rail operators, infrastructure managers, railway service providers, etc.

As the global professional association for the railway sector, UIC also acts as a platform for international cooperation, knowledge-sharing and the development of common approaches to addressing emerging challenges affecting rail transport and society at large.

UIC is a technical association having relevant expertise in all the different fields of railways. As far as security is concerned, the UIC Security Platform brings together rail security experts from UIC members and is a trusted space where members come together to share best practices, engage in peer-to-peer learning, and work towards a shared, cohesive security strategy, ensuring the resilience of the railways.

In this context, UIC promotes a human-centred approach to railway security, recognising that railways play a critical role not only in ensuring operational safety and security, but also in protecting passengers and vulnerable populations travelling across borders and regions.

Already identified as a priority topic in 2021 for the Security Platform, the issue of human trafficking in the railways gained in importance through discussions held at the UIC Refugees Task Force, which was launched in March 2022 to help UIC members manage the influx of Ukrainian refugees. During this time, a survey on this issue was sent out to UIC members. The results of the survey demonstrated that few UIC members had identified human trafficking as an issue within their companies and even fewer stated to provide staff with awareness campaigns, guidance or trainings. These findings highlighted the need for greater awareness, stronger coordination and enhanced capacity-building within the railway sector to identify and respond to risks linked to trafficking in human beings.

At the 18th UIC World Security Congress, co-organised with the Railway Protection Force of the Indian Railways in Jaipur in February 2023, the session on 'Human Security Approach' welcomed presentations addressing human trafficking from INTERPOL and Nobel Laureate Mr. Kailash Satyarthi. Following this, the UIC Security Platform 2023 Jaipur Declaration¹ was published, calling on the railways to "especially ensure protection of vulnerable sections of the rail users such as Children, Women, the Elderly, the Sick and Ailing travelling on trains and those susceptible to exploitation by the Human Traffickers."

This joint UIC-UNECE report therefore reflects a shared commitment to strengthening international cooperation, improving awareness among railway stakeholders and contributing to broader efforts to combat trafficking in human beings through the rail sector.



1 UIC (2023). The Jaipur Declaration. Available at: https://uic.org/events/IMG/pdf/uic_wsc_jaipur_final_declaration.pdf

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Preface

Human trafficking is a complex, multi-faceted crime and a severe violation of human rights that affects States, businesses, and societies — and it often worsens during times of crisis and emergencies. While human trafficking does not require movement, it often involves transportation systems. Traffickers exploit transport networks not only to recruit and move victims, but also to control and exploit them in transit hubs and stations. The railway environment, with its high passenger volumes and anonymity, is particularly vulnerable to such abuse. Traffickers count on people being unprotected and unfamiliar with their surroundings; staff being unaware of the signs; and rapid, often cross-border travel to avoid detection.

This is why the Recommendations for Combatting Human Trafficking on the Railways developed by the expert group under the leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and International Union of Railways (UIC) are so vital. They address a critical yet often overlooked dimension of anti trafficking efforts: the role of railways in preventing trafficking, detecting suspicious situations, and assisting victims.

The scale of both the challenge and the opportunity is immense. Billions of passengers travel by rail each year, and every journey represents a chance to detect and disrupt trafficking. Clear referral pathways can help ensure that victims — who might otherwise remain unseen — receive protection and support. At the same time, railway operators must ensure that their supply chains are free from exploitative labour and that staff uphold strong ethical standards, preventing any inadvertent contribution to trafficking. A zero tolerance approach to human trafficking on railways strengthens passenger safety and reinforces trust in the entire rail system.

As the OSCE Special Representative and Co ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, I extend my sincere appreciation to UNECE and UIC for this productive and results oriented collaboration. My Office stands ready to promote the implementation of these Recommendations across the OSCE region — through technical assistance, strategic guidance, and knowledge exchange. Together, we can ensure that the railway sector becomes a powerful ally in the fight against human trafficking: one that protects passengers, supports victims, and prevents traffickers from misusing these essential public spaces.

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Introduction

The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons through force, abduction, fraud, deception, or coercion with the aim of exploiting them². Common forms of exploitation include forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced begging, organ removal, and other mixed and emerging threats³. Human trafficking is a global concern, and the crime knows no borders. While there are no precise figures on the extent of human trafficking, many countries now monitor registered victims. These figures show:

- Between 2020-2023, over 200,000 human trafficking victims were detected and reported by 156 countries⁴
- In 2024, the estimated global annual illegal profit from trafficking in human beings amounted to USD 236 billion⁵

Since many victims remain undetected, it is likely that the actual number is significantly higher. Women and children constitute the majority of identified trafficking victims, reflecting their increased vulnerability to forced labour and sexual exploitation. At the same time, available data indicates a growing number of male victims, including men and boys, in recent years, largely associated with forced labour and forced criminality. The International Labour Organization estimated in 2022 that 27.6 million people were living in forced labour, including sexual exploitation, which is one of the most common reasons for which people are trafficked⁶. Furthermore, State detection figures demonstrate that forced criminality as a form of exploitation has expanded rapidly, rising from just one percent of all identified victims in 2016 to eight percent in 2022⁴.

As stated in the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, traffickers prey on economic and social vulnerabilities to lure their victims and the global Covid-19 pandemic increased already existing vulnerabilities, placing even more persons at risk⁷. An example of potentially vulnerable persons relates to the movement of refugees across borders, such as resulting from the “Arab Spring” where increased numbers of refugees crossed the Mediterranean and then proceeded north using the rail network, as well as during the influx of Ukrainian refugees into Europe in 2022⁸. Further groups who are particularly vulnerable to traffickers include migrants, unaccompanied minors, individuals from minority or socially excluded communities, those suffering from financial instability or lack of employment opportunities, among others.



2 UNODC. (2021). Trafficking in Persons Protocol. Available at : https://www.unodc.org/res/human-trafficking/2021the-protocol-tip_html/TIP.pdf

3 United Nations. (N.D.). Understanding Human Trafficking. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/understanding-human-trafficking>

4 UNODC. (2024). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789211069891>

5 International Labour Organization (ILO). (2024). Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.54394/JJE9035>

6 International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM.) (2022). Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. Available at : https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/ILO_GEMS-2022_Report_EN_Web.pdf

7 European Commission. (2021). The EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, 2021 – 2025. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0171>

8 E.g., Mcgrath, S. (2022). Concern grows over traffickers targeting Ukrainian refugees. Associated Press. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-immigration-moldova-poland-europe-17c62db4c88e04e7253865bc20c9f0>

Intersection of human trafficking and the rail environment

As an essential service, passenger rail is an integral part of society used by most members of the public, including those who might be vulnerable to trafficking. Furthermore, given the open nature of the rail environment and the fact that most railway stakeholders and national authorities are not in favour of additional mandatory European/International rail security legislation, it could mean that rail is an attractive means of transport for perpetrators on the one hand. On the other hand, when victims self-rescue, they may escape to rail stations or through the rail network. That said, there is very limited, available public data on how the crime of human trafficking intersects with the rail sector and little published research on the topic.

One exploratory study dating from 2018, which was carried out in the United States of America, confirmed that traffickers recruit victims at train stations and use railways to transport victims, but also called for further research⁹. In 2020, International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative found that across 171 countries and over 80,000 victims of human trafficking, 33% crossed official points of entry by train and 15% crossed unofficial points of entry by train¹⁰.

The fact that traffickers make use of the rail environment has also been confirmed by UIC Security Platform members whose railway security staff have certain law enforcement prerogatives. They have supported presumed victims and arrested perpetrators who were using their rail network, subsequently handing over the alleged traffickers to respective law enforcement agencies to take suitable legal action¹¹. RAILPOL, the European Network of Railway Police Forces, further states that organised crime groups use railways as a means of transporting victims¹². Lastly, media reports have confirmed the presence of traffickers in rail stations, most notably during the influx of Ukrainian refugees into Europe in 2022¹³.

During this period, the railways were called upon on as a trusted partner by authorities, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and civil society organisations to disseminate anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns. A good example of this was a multilingual campaign launched together by DB A.G. (German Railways) and the German Federal Police (see Box 3). Moreover, in order to ensure malicious actors weren't present in stations, railways set up requirements to register and verify volunteers who came to railway stations to help, such as the wearing of a uniform/vests, distributing daily different coloured wristbands, etc. Railways also took efforts to report suspicious behaviours, as for example frontline PKP S.A.'s (Polish Railways) security staff at Przemyśl Główny station who recognized and reported suspected victims and/or perpetrators to LEAs on an ad-hoc basis.

The above listed examples demonstrate that certain rail stakeholders are taking actions in the fight against trafficking in human beings, and indeed, alongside national, European and international public authorities, the rail sector should have a specific and complementary role to play in protecting and securing people from the threat of human trafficking. That said, a sector-wide approach seems to be missing when compared to other private sectors¹⁴, whose recommendations are not immediately applicable to the rail environment. This is in part due to the huge, open and interconnectedness of the rail sector, with UIC reporting 1,151,314 line-kilometres¹⁵ in the world¹⁶, and railway stations being largely recognised as public spaces. This means that a completely 'hardened' approach to security, whereby all assets are protected, is simply not feasible nor desirable, and restricted access through strict screening, search and identity check measures is not applicable nor authorised in many cases.

9 Polaris. (2018). On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking Transportation Industry. Available at: <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Roadmap-for-Systems-and-Industries-to-Prevent-and-Disrupt-Human-Trafficking-Transportation-Industry.pdf>

10 CTDC. <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/trafficking-journeys-through-international-borders>

11 E.g., Ministry of Railways. (2024). Railway Protection Force (RPF) conducted a month long nationwide Drive under Operation "Narcos" and Operation AAHT during January 2023. Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1897294>

12 RAILPOL. (N.D.). About RAILPOL. Available at: <https://www.railpol.eu/site/about-railpol>

13 E.g., Pieper, O. (2022). German police warn refugees of traffickers. DW. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/german-police-warn-ukraine-refugees-of-human-traffickers/a-61086922>

14 e.g., ICAO. (2023). Doc 10171 – Manual on a Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Aviation Sector. Available at: https://www.icao.int/Security/FAL/ANNEX9/Documents/10171_cons_en.pdf

15 UIC assess the size of a network in line-kilometers. For 1 line, you can have 1 or 2 or more tracks. For example, in freight terminals, there many tracks.

16 UIC. (2026). RAILISA (RAIL Information System and Analyses). Available at: <https://uic.org/support-activities/statistics/>

UNECE and UIC supporting the railway sector in combatting human trafficking

In June 2024, UNECE and UIC jointly organised a workshop on Security of Vulnerable Users in Railways¹⁷. Over 35 participants, representing railway stakeholders, ministries of transport, UN agencies, international associations, and civil society organisations came together to discuss the security challenges associated with vulnerable rail users and to share good practices regarding measures to ensure their security. During the session on the fight against trafficking in persons, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) provided definitions of the crime and discussed the intersection between victims, perpetrators, and the rail environment. Next, representatives from the Polish State Railways (PKP S.A.), the Polish Railway Protection Guard (Straż Ochrony Kolei - SOK) and the German Railways (DB A.G.) shared their efforts on raising awareness of the threat of trafficking in human beings during the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis. Participants also heard from civil society organisations. The charity organisation, *It's a Penalty*, explained how they have partnered with the transport sector to raise awareness during major sporting events, and the International Justice Mission shared a powerful testimonial from a survivor of trafficking. The workshop led to the creation of a joint UNECE – UIC Informal Expert Group on Combatting Human Trafficking on the Railways.

UIC then also partnered with RAILPOL to deliver a workshop “Fighting Human Trafficking in the Railway Environment” on 26 March 2025 at UIC HQ in Paris. Around 50 participants representing railway companies, railway police, government agencies, international associations, private sector and civil society representatives all came together to foster collaboration on combating this heinous crime. UNECE was a high-level speaker at this event and delegates were also invited to join the Informal Expert Group.



¹⁷ Report and presentations available: <https://unece.org/transport/events/special-session-working-party-rail-transport-sc2>

The Informal Expert Group on Combatting Human Trafficking on the Railways

Launched with a kick-off meeting in April 2025, the Informal Expert Group (IEG) was mandated by UNECE to work on the following areas:

- a. Identify current practices in combatting human trafficking on the railways encompassing actions of railway companies, national and international authorities, and institutions and other stakeholders;
- b. Identify transferable best practice examples from other sectors (e.g., tourism, labour, shipping, ride share, trucking, ...);
- c. Develop recommendations on combatting human trafficking for member States and railway companies.

The IEG has come together for a total of 4 meetings.

IEG members include, but are not limited to, the following organisations:

Africa Alliance for Health, Research and Economic Development, Amtrak Police Department, Austrian Federal Railways, Austrian Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure, Belgian National Railways (SNCB), Croatian Ministry of Transportation, Deutsche Bahn (DB A.G.), Empowerment Collective, European Association of Railway Police Forces (RAILPOL), Eurostar, French Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women Against Violence and the Fight Against Human Trafficking (MIPROF), French National Railways (SNCF), Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), Indian Ministry of Railways - Railway Protection Force (RPF), International Association of Public Transport (UITP), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Justice Mission (IJM), Italian State Railways (FS Italiane), It's a Penalty, Netherlands Ministry of Defence, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB), Polish Ministry of Infrastructure, Polish State Railways (PKP S.A.), Sonali Zol Foundation, Swiss Federal Office for Customs and Border Security (FOCBS), OneGoal Initiative for Governance (OGI), Türkiye Directorate General for Regulation of Transport Services (DGRTS), Uber Europe, UK Border Force (UKBF), U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Counter-Trafficking Initiative (CTI) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Network of Think Tanks for International Agricultural Trade (UNNTIAI), and VIA Rail Canada Police.

These recommendations are the fruit of all these activities. Through the two workshops and IEG meetings, we identified best practices from railways and other sectors and developed the key recommendations as follows.



Key recommendations

Based on the discussions and analysis undertaken by the Group discussed above, a set of recommendations have been developed for the railways focusing on:

1. Improve data gathering
2. Deploy security measures
3. Build healthy railway procurement environment
4. Enable lasting impact through collaboration supported by policy

The manner in which these areas can be implemented is discussed in more detail below.

1. Improve data gathering

There is a general acknowledgement that there is a lack of data on human trafficking in general, and an even greater dearth of data on how this heinous crime intersects with the railways, specifically. This lack of data on human trafficking passing through the railways significantly constrains effective policy development aimed at combatting it and operational responses. Human trafficking activity and risk is not evenly distributed across the rail network, where major hubs, border-adjacent stations, and long-distance corridors may exhibit higher vulnerability. If more data were available to the rail sector, staffing levels and their distribution, surveillance capacity, and security presence could be more easily adapted to the associated threat level of any given area.

Addressing existing data gaps and facilitating data sharing would provide governments, law enforcement, border guard authorities, and rail operators¹⁸ with the objective basis needed to implement preventive measures more effectively.

1.1. Address the data gaps

The absence of reliable, rail-specific human trafficking data remains one of the biggest challenges. Trafficking incidents are rarely recorded with reference to the mode of transport, which results in a systematic underestimation of the role of railways in trafficking chains. This blind spot limits the ability of both rail operators and national authorities to anticipate human trafficking risks, identify hotspots, or design targeted preventive measures.

Integrating transport-related variables into national and operator-level reporting tools is therefore essential. Emphasis should be placed on simple, low-burden documentation that remains fully compliant with national and European data protection frameworks. Capturing simple variables, such as the mode of transport, travel context, route characteristics, and observable behavioural indicators, can significantly improve situational awareness without requiring railway operators to collect personal data beyond their legal mandate or defined purposes.

In parallel, reporting of suspected human trafficking should be encouraged across citizens, private companies, and civil society organisations, while embedding the same core variables into existing incident-reporting systems used by rail operators, police, border agencies, other national anti-trafficking stakeholders, international organizations, and NGOs. A consistent data structure across institutions is crucial to ensure interoperability and analytical value.

¹⁸ Rail operators include both Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings.

Developing a shared data dictionary and standardised reporting categories – covering concepts such as ‘weak signals’¹⁹, ‘station-level risk’, ‘onboard behavioural indicators’, or ‘recruitment hotspot’ – would enable consistent observation, recording, interpretation, and comparison of data across operators, agencies, and countries. Importantly, this approach should prioritise aggregated and qualitative information derived from staff observations, avoiding the need to collect or process personal data. Over time, as reporting quality improves, these datasets could provide a foundation for trend analysis and risk forecasting. At the same time, authorities should ensure that railway operators, among others who report, know that their reporting initiatives will be taken seriously, even if they are not informed of specific follow-up actions. This reinforces trust and encourages continued engagement. A joint effort is therefore essential.

Finally, integrating human trafficking related indicators into national transport statistics could help address persisting data gaps. International meetings, such as UNECE’s Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), that bring together stakeholders on transport data collection and management, in collaboration with the UIC Security Platform and Statistics Platform, could serve as a forum for developing common methodologies, questionnaires for on-the-ground staff and ensuring comparability across countries.

1.2. Facilitate data sharing

Even where human trafficking data exists, it is rarely shared across institutions, resulting in fragmentation and duplicated efforts. The main concerns of data sharing evolve around data privacy, security, and sensitivity.

In line with data protection principles, railway operators could primarily share aggregated and anonymised information, rather than personal data, unless explicitly required and authorised under applicable legal frameworks. This ensures that operators are not placed in a position that exceeds their legal mandate. Patterns such as repeated reports of recruitment at specific stations, suspicious behaviour observed on certain routes, or seasonal risk fluctuations can all be shared in a way that is both legally compliant and operationally valuable, without exposing individuals. Recent initiatives demonstrate the feasibility of privacy-preserving data sharing. For example, Microsoft Research, in collaboration with IOM, has developed methods to generate synthetic data from sensitive victim case records held by the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC). These datasets preserve the statistical properties of the original data without representing actual individuals. The data is available to the public and includes information derived from over 17,000 victims and survivors of trafficking identified across 123 countries and territories²⁰. Another example is the data shared in the form of heat maps. It helps pinpoint locations where measures are most needed and would be most effective (see Box1).

Another approach would be establishing secure information-sharing networks or digital platforms with highly restricted access to enable the safe and timely exchange of human trafficking related data within the railway environment. Access should be limited to authorised railway police units and designated security services operating in the railways, supported by clear governance structures, robust user authentication protocols, and comprehensive audit trails to ensure accountability.

Furthermore, access could be secured through multi-factor authentication and role-based permissions, ensuring that users can only view or input information relevant to their operational responsibilities. Data should be encrypted and hosted within secure environments. Such systems could be modelled after existing information-sharing mechanisms used in aviation security or cross-border policing. Leveraging these models can reduce implementation barriers, build institutional trust, and ensure alignment with existing legal and data protection frameworks.

Regular cross-sectoral coordination, through virtual or in-person meetings, could help maintain trust and ensure that data sharing leads to concrete action rather than passive information exchange.

19 Ansoff H.I. (1975). Managing strategic surprise by response to weak signals. *California Management Review* 1975;18(2):21-33. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/41164635>.

20 Available at: <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/global-victim-perpetrator-synthetic-dataset#no-back>

Box 1. Good practices

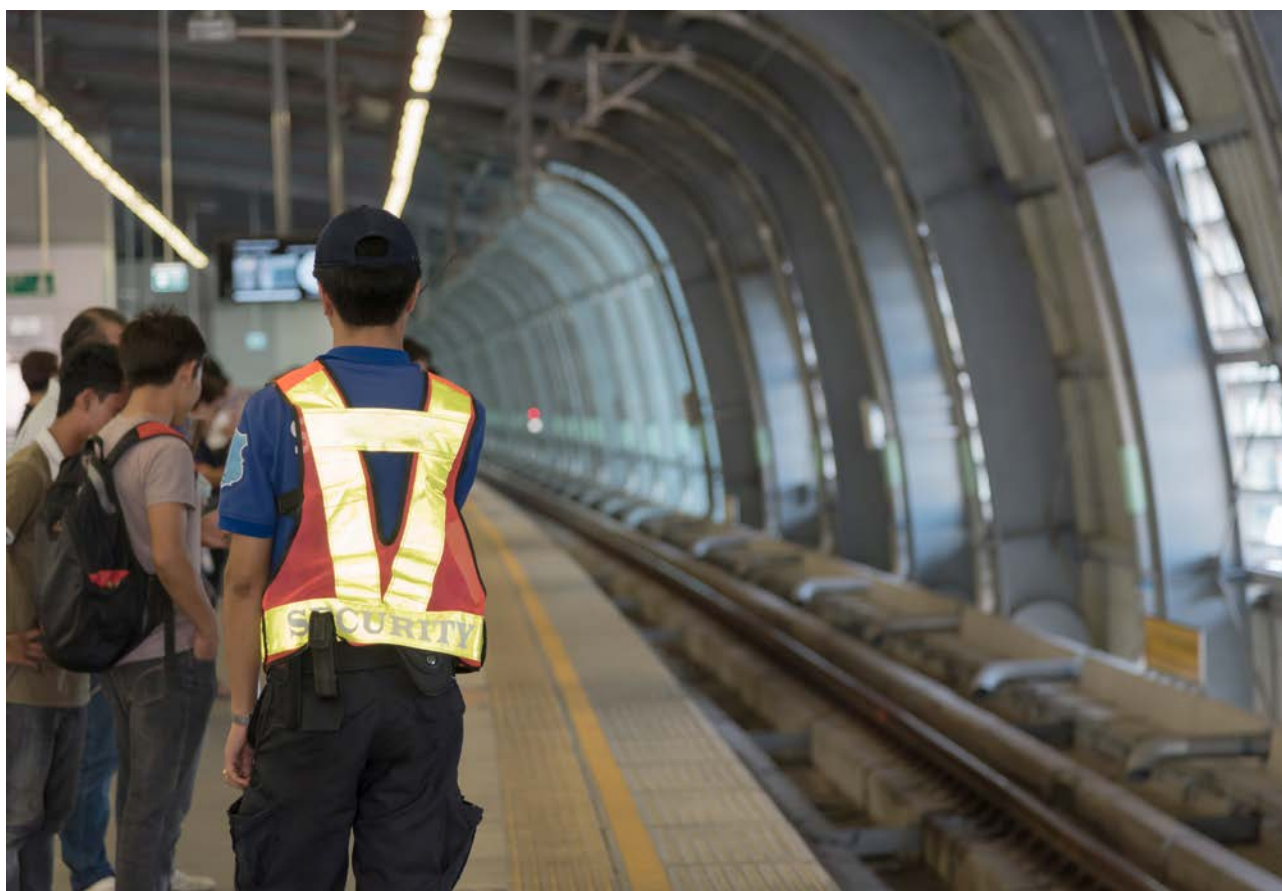
Railway Protection Force of Indian Railways Heat Map

Based on data collected for reported incidents of human trafficking, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways were able to identify train routes with the highest number of incidents, allowing them to deploy more anti-trafficking measures on those routes.

1.3. Develop rail specific indicators

Many publicly available indicator lists either do not include the railways or, when they do, seem to take it as a single environment. This overlooks the complexity of the sector, such as differences between commuter and regional trains, long-distance or high-speed lines, rural and urban stations, passenger and freight, etc. It also fails to reflect the diversity of actors present in railway environments, including public and private railways and stations operators, security stakeholders, businesses and service providers operating shops, hotels, catering and other facilities.

As explained in the introduction, the specificities of the rail sector mean that potential victims and perpetrators might act differently in the different environments, and some common indicators, such as those regarding identify documents, are not immediately applicable. Furthermore, specific indicators for emergency or crisis situations may also be necessary²¹. This may be due to a lack of data and so data collection should also allow for the creation of railway specific indicators.



21 See for example, these guidelines from the OSCE: <https://cthb.osce.org/cthb/561466>

2. Deploy security measures

The absence of perfect data, however, must not delay action. Human trafficking is structurally under-reported across all sectors, and waiting for accurate statistics only allows criminal networks to operate unchecked. International experience demonstrates that proactive interventions themselves improve detection and reporting over time. Furthermore, preventing even a single exploitation from occurring or even saving one person from traffickers should be reason enough to act.

Risk-based allocation of limited financial and human resources allows authorities and operators to deploy personnel and other resources where they can deliver the greatest preventive and disruptive impact. Authorities and rail operators should therefore implement and prioritise practical preventive measures based on existing evidence and knowledge. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022²², 41 per cent of human trafficking victims escaped exploitation through 'self-rescue', highlighting the critical role of early detection, accessible information, and visible support mechanism in the rail environment.

In taking action, focus should be on providing training and practices for those working in the rail environment to use, as well as developing information campaigns targeted at the general public as well as towards potential victims.

2.1. Develop Standard Operating Procedures for railway staff in case of suspected human trafficking

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) tailored to the rail environment are a particularly urgent need. Railway staff often face uncertainty on how to act when suspecting human trafficking due to a lack of internal procedures on how to report such suspicions. SOPs would provide clear guidance on recognising behavioural cues, safe escalation pathways, and appropriate responses in station and onboard contexts.

SOPs should clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of railway staff. As human trafficking is a criminal matter, investigative functions, the formal identification of victims or perpetrators, and enforcement actions, including apprehension, fall exclusively within the remit of law enforcement and judicial authorities.

Railway staff should be aware that individuals involved in suspicious or potentially unlawful activities may themselves be victims of trafficking and coercion. Their role is not to assess culpability or distinguish between perpetrators and victims, but to identify indicators of potential trafficking, report suspicions in safe and timely manner, and cooperate with relevant authorities. Clarifying these boundaries would reduce hesitation, avoid role confusion, and support consistent and appropriate responses, while minimising the risk of reinforcing harm or trauma experienced by victims of forced criminality.

SOPs should be tailored to regional contexts and operational realities, while drawing on existing international tools such as UNODC human trafficking indicators²³, adapted to the rail context. SOPs should also include guidance on how rail staff should respond when potential victims proactively seek assistance or make contact following awareness-raising campaigns. Railway staff and other stakeholders should also be aware of available victim support mechanisms in the region to refer victims to the appropriate services as necessary.

SOPs should emphasise that reporting parties may not be informed of the outcome of their report, as the handling of reported information remains the sole responsibility of authorities and specialised non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, they should underline that all reports are taken seriously. Formal legal protections for whistleblowers and reporting individuals should also be highlighted, as these promote safe and confident reporting of trafficking suspicions. To increase efficiency, regular de-briefing or information exchange meetings between railway staff, authorities and anti-trafficking NGOs could be established to discuss persistent and emerging trafficking trends and plan joint responses.

22 UNODC. (2022). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf

23 UNODC. (N.D.). Available at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/HT_indicators_E_LOWRES.pdf

At the national level, collaboration between the railways and the National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator²⁴ or equivalent mechanism would be paramount to ensure co-ordinated national and international effort to combat human trafficking (see Recommendation 4.1). Training programmes should be explicitly designed to operationalise these SOPs, ensuring that staff are able to apply procedures consistently in real-world scenarios (see Recommendation 2.2).

2.2. Develop training programmes which take into account the specific context of the rail environment

Training for rail staff

Training is one of the key measures to provide guidelines to help rail staff detect potential threats and respond effectively. The rail environment differs fundamentally from other sectors, as described in the introduction. As such, staff have limited authority, interactions with passengers tend to be brief, and, as facilitators of the free movement of people²⁵, there are rarely mandatory ID checks imposed by the authorities. Training for rail staff should therefore focus on recognising subtle behavioural indicators that, if observed collectively, may signal exploitation. Training should be based on, and aligned with, established standard operating procedures (see Recommendation 2.1 above), translating institutional guidance into practical decision-making and response skills.

Early and close collaboration between training providers and rail operators is essential. Co-designed training programmes ensure alignment with operational realities, staff roles, and local contexts. Training should differentiate between environments – urban versus rural stations, intercity versus commuter trains, and station versus onboard settings – to deliver tailored, scenario-based guidance. Incorporating survivor voices and consulting lived experience experts to evaluate existing training and inform the development of new modules is key to ensuring that training remains relevant and effective. Expertise from NGOs, law enforcement, and child protection authorities can further enhance relevance and impact.

A role-based approach is recommended, ensuring that all railway staff receive training tailored to their responsibilities. General awareness modules should be provided to all front-line staff, complemented by more specialised modules for supervisors and dedicated security personnel, reflecting their distinct functions within reporting and response procedures. Core training elements should include rail-specific behaviour scenarios, indicators of trafficking to enhance early identification, clear reporting instructions, victim-centred trauma-informed communication, and safety consideration for both staff and potential victims. Training should be based on a human rights perspective and victim-centred approach (see Box 2).



²⁴ For more information on the function, please see: [National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator: A leading role in State's anti-trafficking response | Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#) and [Political will and whole-of-society approach needed to boost the impact of anti-trafficking efforts, say anti-trafficking leaders at annual meeting | Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

²⁵ Often times under Provision of Service Obligations

Box 2. Good practices

A role-based training in the United States

Amtrak employs a rail-specific, role-based approach to human trafficking awareness training. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT), Amtrak uses Blue Campaign-aligned training and educational materials to strengthen awareness of subtle behavioural indicators, promote brief and safe interventions, and reinforce victim-centred, human rights-based responses consistent with standard operating procedures.

Training is tailored to employee roles and contexts—such as onboard crews, station staff, supervisors, and police personnel—and is complemented by ongoing refresher materials and outreach resources developed by the Amtrak Police Department. This integrated model ensures employees understand their responsibilities, limitations, and reporting pathways, while supporting effective coordination with law enforcement and social service partners in the identification and protection of potential trafficking victims.



Joint training, including with specialised anti-trafficking police units, public social services, child protection authorities, and anti-trafficking NGOs could foster information sharing and strengthen inter-agency cooperation. Although each country's situation is different, the international coordinated scope of such training, to ensure that some basic common principles are adopted, could be developed through coordination mechanisms identified in Recommendation 4 below.

Initial and recurrent training could be systematically implemented, including through integration into regular refresher courses, as trafficking tactics continue to evolve. Regular (e.g. annual or biennial) updates and evaluation help ensure that staff remain aware of emerging trends and risks.

Training and capacity-building efforts could also extend beyond railway staff to include staff that work in other environments in the station (such as catering or in-station shop staff) in order to promote a common understanding of indicators, procedures, and roles across all stakeholders in the rail environment.

Training for relevant responding agencies

Responding agencies, such as law enforcement or border guard authorities, also need to be aware of the specificities of the rail environment and how these impact the crime of human trafficking.

2.3. Carry out joint patrols

Railway operators and competent authorities should conduct joint patrols involving railway security, law enforcement, and, where relevant, specialised border units. Where appropriate, joint patrols may also include trained civil society actors, such as anti-trafficking NGOs or social workers, particularly those providing outreach and victim support services. Joint patrols are among the most cost-effective operational measures available, as they enhance visibility, deter traffickers, and facilitate rapid information exchange.

The preventive and detection value of joint patrols is particularly high during increased vulnerability, such as large-scale refugee movements, peak migration periods (e.g. seasonal labour), holiday seasons, or major international events that generate high passenger volumes. Even modest adjustments to patrol schedules, staffing composition, or deployment locations can significantly improve early identification and intervention outcomes.

Joint patrols also support confidence-building between railway staff and authorities by clarifying roles, improving communication channels, and reinforcing shared responsibility. In contexts where trust in law enforcement may be low, the use of non-uniformed or mixed patrol teams, including railway security and trained civilian personnel, NGOs, or social workers may further enhance effectiveness by reducing intimidation and encouraging information-sharing from passengers and staff, as well as facilitating victim-centred responses. Operational experience demonstrates the value of such measures as seen in Box 3.

Box 3. Good practices

Coordinated Patrols in Germany

During the influx of Ukrainian refugees in early 2022, joint efforts involving railway staff, police, volunteers, and citizens enabled the early identification and timely intervention in Germany. Many volunteers, including DB staff and citizens, patrolled in the station and assisted in identifying suspicious activities, while police or security personnel escorted identified individuals behaving suspiciously out of the train station. These coordinated patrols contributed to early detection, risk mitigation, and the protection of vulnerable individuals during a period of heightened exposure to trafficking risks.

Joint Patrols in the United States

After COVID-19, Amtrak expanded joint patrols involving local, state, and federal partners to address human trafficking risks across the U.S. passenger rail system. These intelligence-led patrols focus on targeted enforcement, risk-based manifest reviews, and high-visibility operations in stations, onboard trains, and other locations associated with trafficking activity, with enhanced deployments during special events and peak travel periods. Patrols also incorporate outreach efforts, including the distribution of educational materials, to raise awareness of trafficking indicators and visibly demonstrate the coordinated work being undertaken to protect vulnerable passengers.

2.4. Conduct public awareness campaigns to raise general awareness of the issue

As a highly frequented public space, public awareness campaigns to prevent and detect human trafficking displayed in rail premises have high potential. Public awareness campaigns are among the highest-impact, lowest-cost tools available to the rail sector. The objective is to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of human trafficking, inform passengers of official reporting channels, and mobilise the traveling public as additional ‘eyes and ears’.

Effective passenger engagement does not require detailed knowledge of trafficking indicators. Providing simple guidance on how and where to report suspicious behaviour can already trigger life-saving interventions.

Railways benefit from constant passenger flows, creating a multiplier effect when awareness messaging is deployed effectively. Campaigns should be multilingual, visually clear, and placed strategically in high-traffic locations in rural and urban areas, such as station entrances, ticket halls, platforms, and long-distance trains. Digital media, such as mobile applications, station screens, and audio announcements onboard trains and in stations, should be used to maximize reach.

The timing of awareness campaigns is equally important. Campaigns should be aligned with periods of increased vulnerability, such as peak migration periods, major holidays, large-scale international events, or crisis situations that lead to increased cross-border movements. Evidence shows that traffickers are more likely to exploit such periods of increased travel and disruption²⁶.

26 UNODC. (2022). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf and US DOT. (2024). Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector. Available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2024-11/ACHT%202024%20Final%20Report%20Preventing%20and%20Addressing%20Human%20Trafficking%20in%20the%20Transportation%20Sector%20%28508-Compliant%29.pdf>

Public-private partnerships can significantly amplify impact. Collaboration between transport operators, technology platforms, law enforcement, and international organisations enables wider dissemination of messages at limited additional cost. Some examples can be seen in Box 4.

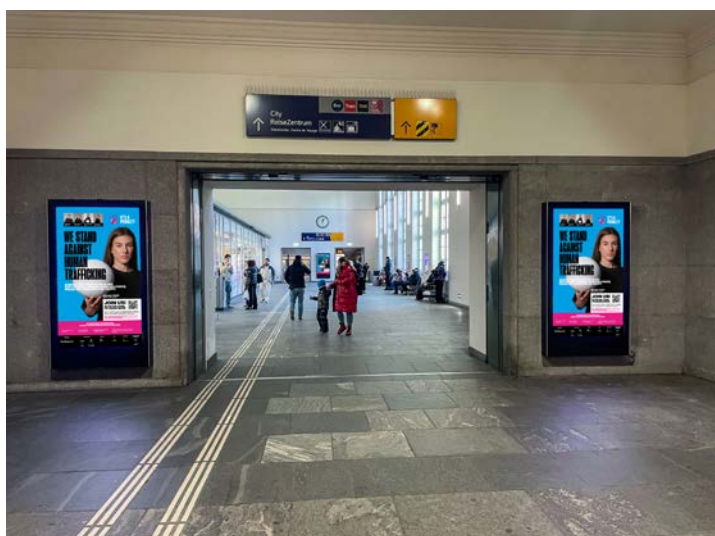
Authorities have an important role to play to encourage rail operators to dedicate some of the precious space available for awareness campaigns to this issue. When it is identified as a policy priority, as was the case during the Ukrainian refugee crisis, railways are a willing partner in public awareness.

As with any other awareness campaign, evaluating the campaign's effectiveness would be good practice.

Box 4. Good practices

It's a Penalty

The UK-based organisation, It's a Penalty²⁷, provides a strong example of coordinated public awareness efforts aimed at preventing exploitation and encouraging reporting. Working in close collaboration with the travel, hospitality and tourism sectors, law enforcement, NGOs and government bodies, the organisation uses social media, press outreach, and transport-based advertising. During a 2022 campaign in Birmingham, posters featuring missing persons, hotline numbers, and QR codes were displayed on 36 screens across five train stations, potentially reaching more than seven million people.



Deutsche Bahn (DB)

Between March and April 2022, approximately 300,000 Ukrainian refugees arrived in Germany, with about 80 per cent entering via DB central stations. DB supported refugee protection efforts by distributing multilingual “Help for Refugees” flyers at stations and onboard trains during peak arrival periods. The materials included QR codes and essential information in multiple languages including English, German, Russian, and Ukrainian, demonstrating how railway operators can rapidly deploy targeted awareness measures in response to emerging risks.



²⁷ <https://itsapenalty.org/>

Railway Security Guard PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A.

Following the workshops conducted by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for personnel of the Polish Railway Security Guard, the Headquarters of the Railway Security Guard PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A. partnered with the OSCE, PKP S.A., and the Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland as the National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator in developing and implementing a nationwide awareness raising campaign on human trafficking for Ukrainian refugees as well as for Latin American nationals as particularly high risk groups in the country. The campaign covers over 30 key railways stations in all regions of Poland, including Poland-Ukraine border crossing areas, reaching over 600,000 passengers daily.



Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking (TLAHT)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's TLAHT initiative maximises the collective impact of multimodal transportation and travel industry stakeholders in combatting human trafficking through employee training, public awareness, and data tracking. Participating organisations include Amtrak and the Association of American Railroads, ensuring the link to the rail sector. The survivor-informed TLAHT Awareness Campaign provides public service announcements and person-centred signage to assist in self-identification, and mode-specific posters, pocket cards, and toolkits, with QR codes linking to indicators and reporting methods. Transportation authorities and operators across the United States deploy campaign materials in and around facilities and vehicles.



Transportation authorities and operators across the United States deploy campaign materials in and around facilities and vehicles.

2.5. Design and carry out campaigns addressed towards potential victims

Campaigns aimed at potential victims must be fundamentally different in tone, format, and placement from general awareness initiatives. They should prioritise safety, minimise distress, and recognise the effects of coercion on victims' behaviour, while remaining culturally sensitive and discreet. It is crucial to design campaigns with the understanding that victims may be accompanied or monitored by traffickers. Messaging should therefore avoid explicit anti-trafficking language that could place individuals at risk if discovered. They should also be developed with the support of local NGOs, subject matter experts with lived experience in human trafficking, and support groups who deal with this on a regular basis, learning from their experiences. Evidence shows that many victims of trafficking do not consider themselves as such, and so targeting messaging should take a rights-based approach²⁸.

Discreet formats are essential. Materials should be available in languages commonly spoken by vulnerable groups and emphasise confidentiality, safety, and the victim's right to support. Placement is also critical. Safer and more discreet areas within stations or trains provide greater opportunities for victims to access information without being observed. Examples of discreet formats or areas should be shared on the restricted platform mentioned in Recommendation 1.2. When combined with targeted visibility measures such as train staff presence and public announcements, these approaches can improve the identification of victims and generate new insight into trafficking flows.

28 UNODC. (2008). Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit-files/07-89375_Ebook%5B1%5D.pdf

3. Build healthy railway procurement environment

3.1. Develop procurement measures to prevent human trafficking and exploitation of workers in railway supply chains

Human trafficking risks in the railway sector extend well beyond passenger operations. Railways rely on complex, globalised supply chains involving multiple tiers of suppliers operating across jurisdictions with varying labour standards. Outsourced and labour-intensive activities, such as rolling stock manufacturing, infrastructure construction, maintenance and cleaning services, catering, accommodation, and uniforms, represent areas in which traffickers may be active, especially in regards to labour exploitation.

Railway operators and public authorities should strengthen due diligence²⁹, transparency, and risk management practices within railway procurement and supply chains to prevent and mitigate risks of human trafficking and forced labour.

Public procurement represents both a risk and an opportunity in the context of human trafficking. When buyers fail to conduct due diligence, traffickers may abuse such tolerance to scale up and expand their operations. Trafficking risks may be displaced upstream, where exploitation is less visible, and victims have limited access to protection. Conversely, large public and quasi-public buyers, including national railway operators, have significant leverage to influence supplier behaviour and promote respect for labour rights through procurement decisions.

Effective procurement safeguards do not require railways to become investigators. Instead, they should focus on applying a risk-based approach to better tailor interventions to local conditions, integrating clear contractual prohibitions on forced labour and trafficking, aligned with international standards, requiring suppliers to demonstrate risk assessments and mitigation measures, enabling audit and termination clauses where violations are identified, ensuring whistle-blowing and grievance mechanisms are accessible to workers throughout the supply chain.

Due diligence should extend beyond first-tier suppliers (i.e. companies with which the railways have a direct contractual relationship). Evidence shows that exploitation frequently occurs several tiers removed from the contracting authority, including in component manufacturing, construction, mining, and other subcontracted services³⁰. Railway operators should therefore promote cascading obligations down the supply chain and cooperate with suppliers, peer operators, regulators, and international organisations to share risk information and good practices.

Governments and rail authorities should embed trafficking prevention into procurement frameworks as a standard element of public-sector risk management, rather than treating it as a voluntary or corporate social responsibility measure. This includes identifying high-risk geographies, goods and services – particularly those involving migrant labour, temporary or agency workers, opaque subcontracting arrangements, and jurisdictions with weak labour protections – and prioritising enhanced due diligence accordingly.

Consideration could be given to strengthening deterrence mechanisms within procurement processes, including improved screening of first-tier contractors and suppliers. The establishment or use of shared reference tools—such as lists or repositories of entities found to be in serious breach of forced labour or related labour standards—could support more robust due diligence and encourage greater accountability across supply chains.

A healthy procurement environment should therefore be viewed not solely as a compliance exercise, but as a preventive tool. Early intervention in procurement and supply-chain practices can reduce demand for exploitative labour, limit opportunities for traffickers to operate within legitimate economic sectors, enable a level playing field for responsible companies, and strengthen the resilience and integrity of the railway sector. In this sense, procurement policy becomes a strategic instrument for combating human trafficking, rather than merely a regulatory obligation.

29 ETI Sweden. (2024). Human rights risks behind trains and trams in Swedish public transport. Available at: https://etiskhandel.se/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Train-tram-full-report_ETI-Sweden.pdf

30 Verité. (2025). Human Trafficking and Other Labor Risks in the Transportation Sector. Available at: https://www.responsible sourcing tool.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Human-Trafficking-and-Other-Labor-Risks-in-the-Transportation-Sector_PDF_FINAL.pdf

Box 5. Combating Forced Labor in Rail Operator Supply Chains

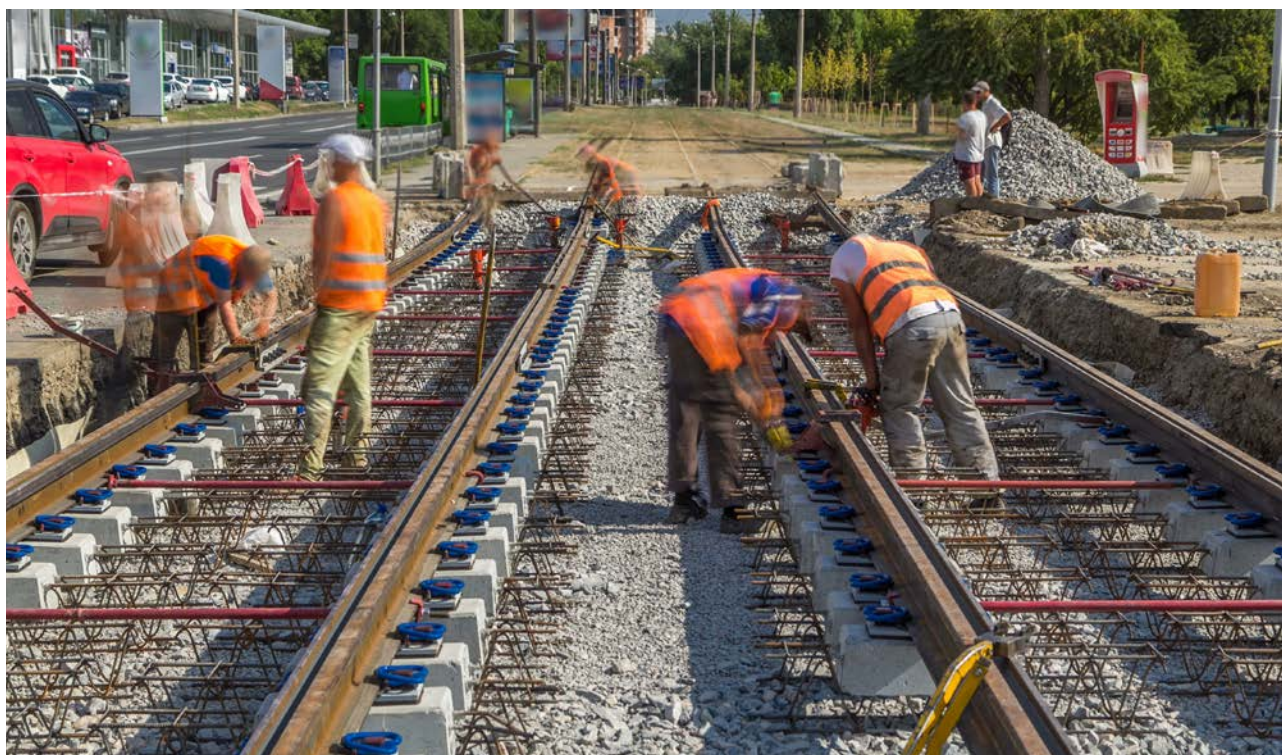
The Responsible Sourcing Tool (RST) Transportation Sector Resources, developed by Verité with support from the U.S. Department of Transportation, offer a multimodal forced labour risk assessment report and a corresponding 12-tool due diligence framework. The tools cover policy development, supply chain mapping, supplier screening, worker engagement, and compliance planning, providing rail and other transportation entities with practical instruments for identifying, preventing, and mitigating forced labour risks across operations and supply chains.

3.2. Include human trafficking in codes of conduct and ethical standards

Railways should also consider including dedicated clauses on collective and individual efforts to combat human trafficking in their already existing codes of conduct or ethical standards. This could help ensure that the actions of the railway company, staff and affiliated individuals contribute to combating trafficking in human beings, and not exacerbate the problem. Such additions could benefit from the knowledge of well-experienced anti-trafficking stakeholders, such as specialised NGOs, to ensure relevance³¹.

Box 6. Network Rail Modern Slavery Statement

Network Rail includes a statement on Modern Slavery³² as part of their Code of Business Ethics. Each year, they publish a report on how they're continuously making sure modern slavery has no place in their organisation or their supply chain.



³¹ See for example, these guidelines from the OSCE: <https://cthb.osce.org/cthb/565006>

³² Network Rail. (N.D.) Modern Slavery Statement. Available at: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/transparency-and-ethics/ethics/modern-slavery-statement/>

4. Enable lasting impact through collaboration supported by policy

Sustainable impact in combatting human trafficking on railways requires institutional structures that collaborate and coordinate not only nationally, but also internationally. Railways should be systematically integrated into national anti-trafficking frameworks, ensuring that the sector is represented in task forces, action plans, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

Lasting impact depends on institutionalised cooperation supported by national policy frameworks. Without international and cross sectoral cooperation and political recognition, railway-led efforts risk remaining fragmented or dependent on voluntary action.

4.1. Strengthen international, cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary cooperation

International cooperation is essential given the cross-border nature of many human trafficking cases. Effective prevention and response require harmonised approaches, information sharing, shared operational principles and coordination among governments, particularly National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators or equivalent mechanisms, railway operators, law enforcement and border authorities, civil society, and victim-support organisations. This needs to be coordinated at international, country and senior management levels, as well as on the ground with those directly working on daily rail operations.

Rail operators should designate dedicated anti-trafficking focal points responsible for internal coordination, external liaising, and monitoring implementation progress. Such focal points support institutional accountability, ensure continuity beyond individual initiatives, and facilitate structured engagement with competent authorities and partners.

Regular coordination meetings between National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators or equivalent mechanisms, rail operators, police, border agencies, social service providers, and NGOs are critical to sustaining momentum and translating information exchange into operational action. The work of the Informal Group of Experts on Combatting Human Trafficking jointly hosted by UNECE and UIC has shown that bringing people together offers neutral spaces to share best practices, raise awareness, and strengthen partnerships across regions and sectors which can be of great benefit in this struggle. Member States could consider whether this format (including potential other partners such as OSCE and UNODC), tied to a formal data sharing platform as identified in Recommendation 1.2 could be beneficial to further combatting human trafficking on the railways.

Public-private partnerships are particularly important as railways operate at the intersection of public infrastructure and commercial activity. Structured cooperation between public authorities and railway operators enables more effective risk assessment, coordinated patrols, aligned awareness campaigns, and timely referral of victims to support services. Such partnerships strengthen coherence across prevention, detection, and response efforts and contribute to a more resilient, system-wide approach to combating human trafficking.

Furthermore, because of the very nature of the crime of human trafficking, which manifests itself across multiple industries and sectors, from mobility and logistics to hospitality and tourism, no single sector can effectively address this crime on its own. Otherwise, actions taken in one sector risk to merely displace the crime to another. Therefore, strengthening cross-sector collaboration would allow for a more cohesive and stronger approach.



4.2. Ensure the issue is recognised as a policy priority

Combatting human trafficking must be recognised as a policy priority at national and sectoral levels. The systematic inclusion of railway and wider transport sector in national and international anti-trafficking task forces, strategies, and action plans is essential to ensure coherence between policy objectives and operational realities. Such recognition signals political commitment, enables resource mobilisation, and provides a mandate for sustained engagement by public authorities and operators.

Embedding human rights due diligence into railway operations, procurement, and supply chains further reinforces a whole-of-organisation approach to trafficking prevention. This alignment with international standards strengthens both prevention efforts and institutional resilience, ensuring that anti-trafficking measures are not confined to frontline activities alone.

Political recognition also enables rapid coordination during crises. During the influx of Ukrainian refugees, cooperation between ministries, railways, and international organisations facilitated the rapid dissemination of awareness materials and protective messaging across rail networks. This experience demonstrates how high-level policy support and buy-in from ministries can translate into timely, coordinated action on the ground.

International policy frameworks provide useful reference points for structuring national responses to human trafficking. At the United Nations, the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, based on the protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and supported by related initiatives such as the UNODC Blue Heart Campaign, as well as regional efforts by OSCE, Council of Europe (CoE), European Union (EU), Organization of American States (OAS), Bali Process and others offer a comprehensive model built around prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships that can be adapted to the specific context of railway transport.



Conclusions

Combatting human trafficking in the railway environment requires a coordinated, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral approach. This report has outlined a series of interrelated recommendations, which can be summarised as follows:

- First, improve human trafficking-related data gathering. Rail-specific human trafficking data collection should be strengthened by integrating simple transport-related variables into reporting systems, encouraging reporting by citizens and staff, and standardising reporting categories. In addition, data sharing should be facilitated through secure, restricted-access digital platforms and the use of aggregated or anonymised data to protect privacy.
- Second, deploy security measures through practical preventive and response initiatives. Key actions include tailored standard operating procedures for rail staff, rail-specific training programmes, joint patrols, public awareness campaigns and discreet campaigns targeting potential victims.
- Third, build a healthy railway procurement environment. Adapting staff code of conducts and strengthening due diligence, transparency, and risk management across railway supply chains can prevent human trafficking and forced labour. Procurement should be leveraged as a strategic tool for anti-trafficking efforts, promoting responsible practices across suppliers and subcontractors.
- Fourth, enable lasting impact through collaboration and policy support. Sustained results require international and cross-sectoral cooperation, the integration of the railway sector into national anti-trafficking frameworks, and political recognition of human trafficking as a policy priority.

As underscored in Recommendation 4, strengthened collaboration across multiple dimensions is key to achieve tangible and sustained impact. Cross-border coordination between railway operators, national co-ordination mechanisms, law enforcement, and border authorities is essential to monitor trafficking flows along long-distance and international routes. Closer engagement with NGOs, survivor networks, and civil society can improve victim-centred interventions and inform training programmes and awareness campaigns. Public-private partnerships among railway operators, governments, law enforcement, technology providers, and communication platforms can improve human trafficking data collection, reporting, and awareness campaigns. Finally, collaboration on international standards, secure data-sharing protocols, and harmonised training programmes can ensure consistency, comparability, and interoperability across countries, building a more resilient and coordinated response to human trafficking in railways.

Member States may wish to formalise multi-stakeholder forums and integrate railways into national anti-trafficking strategies to ensure sustainable, impactful, and coordinated national and cross-border action. The collaborative implementation of these recommendations can ensure that the railway sector contributes meaningfully to the global fight against human trafficking.



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