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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs

Bureau of Justice Statistics
Special Report

January 2009, NCJ 224526

Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2007-08

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The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) and its 2003, 2005, and 2008 reauthorizations are the first comprehensive federal legislation to combat human trafficking and to assist trafficking victims. Under the TVPA, human trafficking has occurred if a person was induced to perform labor or a commercial sex act through force, fraud, or coercion. Any person under age 18 who performs a commercial sex act is considered a victim of human trafficking, regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion were present.

The Trafficking of Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-164) requires biennial reporting on human trafficking, using available data from state and local authorities. In response to this requirement, the Department of Justice (DOJ) funded the creation of the Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS). The system was designed by the Institute of Race and Justice at Northeastern University (NEU) and the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute (UI). It provides data on human trafficking incidents investigated between January 1, 2007, and September 30, 2008.

This report fulfills the requirements under Title II, Sec. 201 (a) (1) of the Act. It is the first in a series that will describe the number and characteristics of suspected human trafficking investigations and their outcomes in the U.S. Data in this report represent a snapshot of the investigations opened by 38 federally funded human trafficking task forces. Because these task forces were not selected to be statistically representative, the data do not represent all incidents of human trafficking nationwide. (See *Methodology* for a map of participating task forces.) While attempts were made to collect complete data from all federal task forces, many task forces began collecting data only recently and were able to provide only partial counts of human trafficking cases for the specified period.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is working with the NEU and UI to improve the quality of reported data and to collect data on investigations by law enforcement agencies in areas not covered by federal task forces. The HTRS is dynamic rather than static. Key findings in this report will be revised and updated as existing records are updated and new cases are added to the system.

Table 1. Number of alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

Type of human trafficking incident	Total incidents	
	Number	Percent
All incidents	1,229	100.0%
Sex trafficking	1,018	82.8%
Forced prostitution*	596	48.5
Child sex trafficking	391	31.8
Other sex trafficking	31	2.5
Labor trafficking	146	11.9%
Other/unknown	65	5.3%

*Includes any suspicion of force, fraud, or coercion.

HTRS tracks incidents of suspected human trafficking

The HTRS is an incident-based data collection system. An incident is defined as—

> *Any investigation into a claim of human trafficking or any investigation of other crimes in which elements of potential human trafficking were identified.*

An investigation is any effort in which the task force spent at least one hour investigating (e.g., collecting information, taking statements, and writing reports) an incident. Each incident is uniquely identified by date (date of occurrence) and number. Once entered into the system, an incident may or may not be determined to involve human trafficking. Regardless, all incidents are retained in HTRS.

In January 2008, task forces began entering data in HTRS. Information on all human trafficking incidents, arrests, prosecutions, and incarcerations that occurred in 2007 was collected by NEU and UI staff. As of September 30, 2008, nearly 83% of the 1,229 reported incidents involved sex trafficking, 12% involved labor trafficking, and 5% involved other or unknown types of human trafficking (table 1).

Only a small subset of all reported investigations (9%) had reached a point of review to determine that the case involved a confirmed human trafficking violation. Even fewer investigations yielded information about whether an arrest had been made, the case prosecuted, or the suspect convicted.

Subsequent tables and accompanying text summarize the number and characteristics of these alleged incidents. Characteristics of victims and suspects are provided as a subset of incidents in which investigations produced relevant information. (See *Methodology* for a description of key items and data reporting.)

Separate tables and text are also provided for confirmed human trafficking incidents. To be confirmed as human trafficking under HTRS, the case must have led to an arrest and been subsequently confirmed by law enforcement, or the victims must have had a *continued presence* requested on their behalf or have received an endorsement for a *t* or *u* Visa application.[1]

[1]Congress created the *t* and *u* non-immigrant Visa classifications with the passage of the TVPA, 2000. The *t* non-immigrant status was created to provide protection to victims of severe forms of human trafficking. The *u* non-immigrant status was designated for victims of certain crimes who had suffered mental or physical abuse, and who were willing to assist in the investigation of human trafficking activity.

Number of alleged and confirmed human trafficking incidents reported by federally funded task forces

- Between January 1, 2007, and September 30, 2008, task forces reported investigating 1,229 alleged incidents of human trafficking. About 78% of these incidents were still under investigation at the end of the reporting period. Investigations were completed and closed during the 21-month reporting period for the remaining 22%.
- Less than 10% of alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces were confirmed as human trafficking, 10% were pending confirmation, and 23% had been determined not to involve any human trafficking elements (table 2). The remaining cases (58%) lacked information on whether the alleged incident was a confirmed human trafficking case.
- Sex trafficking accounted for 83% of the 1,229 alleged incidents of human trafficking reported by task forces. The remaining incidents involved allegations of either labor trafficking (12%) or other/unknown forms of human trafficking (5%).

Table 2. Characteristics of alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, by incident status, 2007-08

	Total incidents		Confirmed human trafficking		Not human trafficking		Human trafficking decision pending[a]		No data available on whether confirmed human trafficking	
Type of human trafficking incident	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All incidents	1,229	100.0%	112	100.0%	286	100.0%	123	100.0%	708	100.0%
Sex trafficking	1,018	82.8%	90	80.4%	205	71.7%	93	75.6%	630	89.0%
Child sex trafficking	391	31.8	34	30.4	16	5.6	30	24.4	311	43.9
Forced prostitution[b]	596	48.5	52	46.4	181	63.3	58	47.2	305	43.1
Other sex trafficking	31	2.5	4	3.6	8	2.8	5	4.1	14	2.0
Labor trafficking	146	11.9%	18	16.1%	53	18.5%	21	17.1%	54	7.6%
Other/unknown	65	5.3%	4	3.6%	28	9.8%	9	7.3%	24	3.4%
Open incidents[c]	958	100.0%	62	100.0%	73	100.0%	115	100.0.%	708	100.0%
Sex trafficking	812	84.8%	47	75.8%	46	63.0%	89	77.4%	630	89.0%
Child sex trafficking	363	37.9	20	32.3	3	4.1	29	25.2	311	43.9
Forced prostitution[b]	425	44.4	23	37.1	42	57.5	55	47.8	305	43.1
Other sex trafficking	24	2.5	4	6.5	1	1.4	5	4.3	14	2.0
Labor trafficking	99	10.3%	12	19.4%	15	20.5%	18	15.7%	54	7.6%
Other/unknown	47	4.9%	3	4.8%	12	16.4%	8	7.0%	24	3.4%
Closed incidents[d]	271	100.0%	50	100.0%	213	100.0%	8	100.0%	0	
Sex trafficking	206	76.0%	43	86.0%	159	74.2%	4	50.0%	0	
Child sex trafficking	28	10.3	14	28.0	13	6.1	1	12.5	0	
Forced prostitution[b]	171	63.1	29	58.0	139	65.3	3	37.5	0	
Other sex trafficking	7	2.6	0	0.0	7	3.3	0	0.0	0	
Labor trafficking	47	17.3%	6	12.0%	38	17.8%	3	37.5%	0	
Other/unknown	18	6.6%	1	2.0%	16	7.5%	1	12.5%	0	

[a]This option was added in mid-2008 and may exclude cases not yet updated as of September 30, 2008.

[b]Includes any suspicion of force, fraud, or coercion.

[c]Includes incidents that were under investigation as of September 30, 2008.

[d]Includes incidents in which the investigation had been completed.

- Of the 1,018 alleged sex trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 391 (38%) involved allegations of child sex trafficking. The other 627 (62%) incidents involved allegations of adult sex trafficking, such as forced prostitution or other sex trafficking crimes.

- Forced prostitution (46%) and child sex trafficking (30%) represented the largest categories of confirmed human trafficking incidents. Allegations of forced or coerced adult prostitution accounted for 63% of human trafficking investigations that were ultimately found not to involve human trafficking elements.

Number of suspects, victims, and agencies in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- A total of 871 suspects were involved in alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, with an average of 1.8 suspects per incident (not shown in table).

- Information on the number of suspects was available for 475 alleged human trafficking incidents. Among these incidents, 62% had only one suspect, 34% had two to five suspects; and 4% had six or more suspects. Labor trafficking incidents were more likely to involve more than one suspect (47%), compared to sex trafficking incidents (37%) (table 3).

- A total of 1,442 victims were involved in alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, with an average of 2.1 victims per incident (not shown in table).

- The number of victims were available for 665 alleged human trafficking incidents. Among those incidents, 71% had one victim, 23% had two to five victims, and 6% had six or more victims. A little over a quarter of alleged sex trafficking incidents contained multiple victims, while nearly half of labor trafficking incidents had more than one victim.

- For the 1,160 alleged human trafficking incidents for which the type of investigating agency information was available, 83% involved a state or local law enforcement entity as the lead agency. Federal agencies were the lead investigating agency in about 16% of alleged human trafficking incidents, while victim service providers were the lead agency in 1% of human trafficking incidents. Federal agencies were the lead agency in 36% of alleged labor trafficking incidents, compared to 12% of alleged sex trafficking incidents.

- Fifty-seven percent of alleged human trafficking incidents were investigated by one agency, 32% by two or three agencies, and 12% by four or more agencies. Nearly 80% of alleged labor trafficking incidents involved more than one investigating agency, compared to 37% of sex trafficking incidents.

Table 3. Number of suspects, victims, and agencies in alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

			Sex trafficking incidents					
	All incidents[a]		All sex trafficking incidents		Child sex trafficking incidents		Labor trafficking incidents	
Incident characteristics	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]
Number of incidents	1,229	100.0%	1,018	100.0%	391	100.0%	146	100.0.%
Number of suspects per incident								
1	293	61.7%	231	63.4%	64	59.8%	43	53.1%
2 to 5	161	33.9	115	31.7	38	35.5	36	44.4
6 or more	21	4.4	18	5.0	5	4.7	2	2.5
No data reported	754		654		284		65	
Number of victims per incident								
1	469	70.5%	401	74.3%	99	76.2%	53	52.0%
2 to 5	154	23.2	112	20.8	26	20.0	34	33.3
6 or more	42	6.3	26	4.8	5	3.8	15	14.7
No data reported	564		479		261		44	
Number of agencies per incident								
1	688	56.9%	634	63.3%	293	75.5%	30	20.5%
2 to 3	383	31.7	278	27.7	71	18.1	79	54.1
4 to 6	118	9.8	80	8.0	25	6.2	29	19.9
7 or more	20	1.7	10	1.0	1	0.3	8	5.5
No data reported	20		16		1		0	
Lead investigating agency								
State, local, U.S. territories	964	83.1%	838	86.9%	363	93.3%	82	59.4%
Federal	183	15.8	119	12.4	24	6.2	50	36.2
Victim service providers	13	1.1	7	0.7	2	0.3	6	4.3
No data reported	69		54		2		8	

Note: There were a total of 871 known suspects and 1,442 known victims in all alleged human trafficking incidents as of September 30, 2008.

[a]Includes 65 incidents that were not classified as sex or labor trafficking.

[b]Percents based on incidents with reported data.

Number of suspects, victims, and agencies in confirmed human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Of the 871 suspects in alleged incidents, 222 suspects were in incidents that had been confirmed (not shown in table). These confirmed incidents averaged 2.4 suspects per incident (table 4).

- Information on the number of suspects was available for 92 confirmed human trafficking incidents. Among these confirmed incidents, 48% reported one suspect, 42% reported two to five suspects, and 10% reported six or more suspects. Over half (55%) of confirmed sex trafficking incidents and about 44% of confirmed labor trafficking incidents had more than one suspect.

- A total of 328 victims were involved in confirmed human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, with an average of 3.0 victims per incident (not shown in table).

- The number of victims was available for 108 confirmed human trafficking incidents. Among these confirmed incidents, 66% reported one victim, 26% reported two to five victims, and 8% reported six or more victims. About a third of confirmed sex trafficking incidents included multiple victims, while half of labor trafficking incidents had more than one victim.

- For the 111 confirmed human trafficking incidents in which the type of investigating agency was available, 71% reported the lead investigating agency as either a state or local law enforcement entity. Federal agencies were the lead investigators in about 28% of confirmed human trafficking incidents, while victim service providers were the lead investigators in 1% of human trafficking incidents. Federal agencies were the primary investigator in half of the 18 confirmed labor trafficking incidents, compared to less than a quarter of the 70 sex trafficking incidents.

- Approximately two-thirds of confirmed human trafficking incidents were investigated by multiple agencies, and nearly a third involved four or more agencies. Multiple agencies were involved in nearly 90% of confirmed labor trafficking incidents, compared to 63% of confirmed sex trafficking incidents.

Table 4. Number of suspects, victims, and agencies in confirmed human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

			Sex trafficking incidents					
	All incidents[a]		All sex trafficking incidents		Child sex trafficking incidents		Labor trafficking incidents	
Incident characteristics	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]
Number of incidents	112	100.0%	90	100.0%	34	100.0%	18	100.0%
Number of suspects per incident								
1	44	47.8%	32	45.1%	12	40.0%	10	55.6%
2 to 5	39	42.4	30	42.3	14	46.7	8	44.4
6 or more	9	9.8	9	12.7	4	13.3	0	0.0
No data reported	20		19		4		0	
Number of victims per incident								
1	71	65.7%	59	67.8%	24	70.6%	9	50.0%
2 to 5	28	25.9	20	23.0	7	20.6	8	44.4
6 or more	9	8.3	8	9.2	3	8.8	1	5.6
No data reported	4		3		0		0	
Number of agencies per incident								
1	36	31.5%	33	37.1%	12	35.3%	2	11.1%
2 to 3	42	37.8	32	36.0	10	29.4	8	44.4
4 to 6	28	25.2	21	23.6	11	32.3	6	33.3
7 or more	5	4.5	3	3.4	1	2.9	2	11.1
No data reported	1		1		0		0	
Lead investigating agency								
State, local, U.S. territories	79	71.2%	68	76.4%	27	79.4%	9	50.0%
Federal	31	27.9	20	22.5	6	17.6	9	50.0
Victim service providers	1	0.9	1	1.1	1	2.9	0	0.0
No data reported	1		1		0		0	

Note: There were a total of 222 known suspects and 328 known victims in all confirmed human trafficking incidents as of September 30, 2008.

[a]Includes four incidents that were not classified as sex or labor trafficking.

[b]Percents based on incidents with reported data.

Characteristics of suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Task forces reported information on the characteristics of 543 suspects in 322 alleged human trafficking incidents. Nearly 8 in 10 suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents were male. In labor trafficking incidents, about a third (31%) of the suspects were female. More than a fifth (21%) of the suspects in sex trafficking incidents were female (table 5).

- Among the 438 suspects for whom information on race and Hispanic origin was reported, blacks represented the largest category (36%), followed by Hispanics (31%). Whites and Asians accounted for 13% and 16% of human trafficking suspects, respectively. Asians constituted the largest category of labor trafficking suspects (37%), while blacks accounted for the largest percentage of sex trafficking suspects (44%).

- Age was reported for 460 suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents. About 40% of suspects were age 35 or older, while 28% were age 18 to 24. Nearly two-thirds of sex trafficking suspects were under age 35. Half of child trafficking suspects were age 18 to 24. Nearly two-thirds of labor trafficking suspects (65%) were age 35 or older.

- Task forces reported on the citizenship status of 313 suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents. U.S. citizens (66%) accounted for the largest percentage of all suspects, followed by undocumented aliens (18%) and permanent residents (7%). Nearly three-quarters of sex trafficking suspects were U.S. citizens (74%), compared to more than a third of labor trafficking suspects (33%). About 40% of suspects in labor trafficking incidents were undocumented or qualified aliens.

Table 5. Characteristics of suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

			Sex trafficking suspects					
	All suspects[a]		All sex trafficking suspects		Child sex trafficking suspects		Labor trafficking suspects	
Suspect characteristics	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]
Total suspects	871	100.0%	678	100.0%	207	100.0%	142	100.0%
Gender								
Male	421	77.7%	336	79.1%	110	80.3%	57	68.7%
Female	121	22.3	89	20.9	27	19.7	26	31.0
No data reported	329		253		70		57	
Race/Hispanic origin								
White[c]	57	13.0%	44	12.8%	21	17.6%	10	14.7%
Black[c]	158	36.1	150	43.7	62	52.1	4	5.9
Hispanic	134	30.6	100	29.2	31	26.1	16	23.5
Asian[c]	71	16.2	45	13.1	4	3.4	25	36.8
Other[c,d]	18	4.1	4	1.2	1	0.8	13	19.1
No data reported	433		335		88		74	
Age								
17 or younger	10	2.2%	9	2.6%	9	8.0%	1	1.3%
18-24	128	27.8	119	34.0	56	50.0	2	2.6
25-34	138	30.0	99	28.3	25	22.3	24	31.2
35 or older	184	40.0	123	35.1	22	19.6	50	64.9
No data reported	411		328		95		65	
Citizenship								
U.S. citizen	206	65.8%	187	74.2%	84	86.6%	14	33.3%
U.S. national	10	3.2	4	1.6	0	0.0	5	11.9
Permanent resident	23	7.3	16	6.3	0	0.0	6	14.3
Undocumented alien	57	18.2	38	15.1	13	13.4	7	16.7
Qualified alien	17	5.4	7	2.8	0	0.0	10	23.8
No data reported	558		426		110		100	

Note: Of the 1,229 alleged human trafficking incidents, 322 contained information on suspects.

[a]Includes 51 suspects who were not classified in the sex or labor trafficking categories.

[b]Percents based on known suspects with reported data.

[c]Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

[d]Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and persons of two or more races.

Characteristics of suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Task forces reported information on the characteristics of 149 suspects in 73 confirmed human trafficking incidents (table 6). About three-fourths (74%) of these suspects were male. Females made up nearly half (46%) of suspects among the 24 confirmed labor trafficking incidents. Males were nearly 80% of suspects in confirmed sex trafficking incidents.

- For the 140 suspects for whom race and Hispanic origin information was available, Hispanics (39%) and blacks (33%) accounted for the majority of suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents. Fewer than a quarter of suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents were Asian (13%) or white (10%). Among sex trafficking incidents, 80% of suspects in confirmed incidents were Hispanic or black. For confirmed labor trafficking incidents, 50% of suspects were Asian.

- Age was reported for 131 suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents. Thirty-eight percent of all suspects were age 35 or older, while 31% were age 18 to 24. About two-thirds of sex trafficking suspects were under age 35. In comparison, the majority of labor trafficking suspects (68%) were age 35 or older. For child trafficking suspects, 55% were age 18 to 24.

- Task forces reported on the citizenship status of 112 suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents. Overall, 56% of suspects in these incidents were U.S. citizens, 21% were undocumented aliens, and 11% qualified aliens. U.S. citizens (64%) constituted the largest percentage of suspects in confirmed sex trafficking incidents. Among the 16 suspects in confirmed labor trafficking incidents, 8 were qualified aliens and 2 were undocumented aliens.

Table 6. Characteristics of suspects in confirmed human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

Suspect characteristics	All suspects[a]		Sex trafficking suspects: All sex trafficking suspects		Sex trafficking suspects: Child sex trafficking suspects		Labor trafficking suspects	
	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]	Number	Percent[b]
Total suspects	222	100.0%	191	100.0%	90	100.0%	27	100.0%
Gender								
Male	110	74.3%	91	77.1%	50	86.2%	13	54.2%
Female	38	25.7	27	22.9	8	13.8	11	45.8
No data reported	74		73		32		3	
Race/Hispanic origin								
White[c]	14	10.0%	13	11.4%	9	15.8%	0	0.0%
Black[c]	46	32.9	46	40.4	30	52.6	0	0.0
Hispanic	54	38.6	46	40.4	18	31.6	5	22.7
Asian[c]	18	12.9	7	6.1	0	0.0	11	50.0
Other[c,d]	8	5.7	2	1.8	0	0.0	6	27.3
No data reported	82		77		33		5	
Age								
17 or younger	6	4.6%	5	4.9%	5	11.4%	1	4.5%
18-24	40	30.5	39	37.9	24	54.5	0	0.0
25-34	35	26.7	26	25.2	6	13.6	6	27.3
35 or older	50	38.2	33	32.0	9	20.5	15	68.2
No data reported	91		88		46		5	
Citizenship								
U.S. citizen	63	56.3%	59	64.1%	41	82.0%	3	18.8%
U.S. national	5	4.5	3	3.3	0	0.0	2	12.5
Permanent resident	8	7.1	7	7.6	0	0.0	1	6.3
Undocumented alien	24	21.4	19	20.7	9	18.0	2	12.5
Qualified alien	12	10.7	4	4.3	0	0.0	8	50.0
No data reported	110		99		40		11	

Note: Of the 112 confirmed human trafficking incidents, 73 incidents contained information on suspect characteristics.

[a]Includes four suspects who were not classified in the sex or labor trafficking categories.

[b]Percents based on known suspects with reported data.

[c]Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

[d]Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and persons of two or more races.

Characteristics of victims in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Task forces reported information on the characteristics of 776 victims in 429 alleged human trafficking incidents (table 7). Over 90% of victims in alleged human trafficking incidents were female. Nearly 40% of victims in labor trafficking incidents were male, while 99% of victims in sex trafficking incidents were female.

- Among the 695 alleged human trafficking victims for whom information on race and Hispanic origin was reported, Hispanics accounted for the largest percentage (40%). Nearly equal percentages of victims were white (23%) or black (21%). Over half (56%) of labor trafficking victims were Hispanic. Asians represented 10% of sex trafficking victims and 31% of labor trafficking victims.

- Age was reported for 751 victims in alleged human trafficking incidents. Approximately two-thirds of human trafficking victims were either age 17 or younger (27%) or age 18 to 24 (38%). Twelve percent of human trafficking victims were age 35 or older. Among sex trafficking victims, nearly a third (30%) were age 17 or younger and 41% were age 18 to 24. Labor trafficking victims tended to be older than other human trafficking victims. Almost 70% of all labor trafficking victims were age 25 or older. Of these victims, 28% were age 35 or older.

- Task forces reported on the citizenship status of 569 victims in alleged human trafficking incidents. Slightly over half (55%) of human trafficking victims were U.S. citizens, while the remainder were either undocumented (38%) or qualified (6%) aliens. Sixty-three percent of all sex trafficking victims, compared to 4% of labor trafficking victims, were U.S. citizens. Undocumented and qualified aliens accounted for 96% of labor trafficking victims.

Table 7. Characteristics of victims in alleged human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

	All victims[a]		All sex trafficking victims[b]		Labor trafficking victims	
Characteristics of victims	Number	Percent[c]	Number	Percent[c]	Number	Percent[c]
Total victims	1,442	100.0%	1,070	100.0%	313	100.0%
Gender						
Male	61	7.9%	7	1.1%	48	39.3%
Female	714	92.1	621	98.9	74	60.7
No data reported	667		442		191	
Race/Hispanic origin						
White[d]	157	22.6%	147	26.0%	2	1.8%
Black[d]	144	20.7	139	24.6	3	2.7
Hispanic	279	40.1	210	37.2	63	55.8
Asian[d]	92	13.2	56	9.9	35	31.0
Other[d,e]	23	3.3	13	2.3	10	8.8
No data reported	747		505		200	
Age						
17 or younger	200	26.6%	184	30.0%	9	7.0%
18-24	285	37.9	251	40.9	27	23.7
25-34	175	23.3	124	20.2	47	41.2
35 or older	91	12.1	54	8.8	32	28.1
No data reported	691		457		198	
Citizenship						
U.S. citizen	311	54.7%	302	63.3%	3	3.9%
U.S. national	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0
Permanent resident	5	0.9	4	0.8	0	0.0
Undocumented alien	217	38.1	161	33.8	50	64.9
Qualified alien	35	6.1	9	1.9	24	31.2
No data reported	873		593		236	

Note: Of the 1,229 alleged human trafficking incidents, 429 contained information on victim characteristics.

[a]Includes 59 victims who were not classified in the sex or labor trafficking categories.

[b]Characteristics of victims of child sex trafficking incidents were not reported separately because some incidents with multiple victims involved both juveniles and adults.

[c]Percents based on known victims with reported data.

[d]Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

[e]Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and persons of two or more races.

Characteristics of victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Task forces reported information on the characteristics of 269 victims in 88 confirmed human trafficking incidents (table 8). Overall, 94% of victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents were female. Nearly 40% of victims in the 36 confirmed labor trafficking incidents were male. For confirmed sex trafficking incidents, almost all of the victims were female.

- Among the 261 victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents for whom information on race and Hispanic origin was reported, the majority (62%) of victims were Hispanic. Whites comprised 20% of human trafficking victims, Asians, 9%, and blacks, 7%. Almost two-thirds of sex trafficking victims were Hispanic (67%). Over half (18 of 35) of labor trafficking victims were Asian.

- Age was reported for 267 victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents. Almost 60% of human trafficking victims were either age 17 or younger (23%) or age 18 to 24 (34%). Eleven percent of human trafficking victims were age 35 or older. A quarter of all sex trafficking victims were age 17 or younger, while more than a third (37%) were age 18 to 24. More than half (56%) of labor trafficking victims were age 35 or older.

- Task forces reported on the citizenship status of 250 victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents. Over two-thirds of victims in all confirmed human trafficking incidents were either undocumented (64%) or qualified (6%) aliens. U.S. citizens accounted for the remaining 30% of victims in these confirmed incidents. Undocumented or qualified aliens accounted for nearly two-thirds of sex trafficking victims and for all of the victims in confirmed labor trafficking incidents.

Table 8. Characteristics of victims in confirmed human trafficking incidents reported by task forces, 2007-08

	All victims[a]		All sex trafficking victims[b]		Labor trafficking victims	
Characteristics of victims	Number	Percent[c]	Number	Percent[c]	Number	Percent[c]
Total victims	328	100.0%	286	100.0%	39	100.0%
Gender						
Male	15	5.6%	1	0.4%	14	38.9%
Female	254	94.4	229	99.6	22	61.1
No data reported	59		56		3	
Race/Hispanic origin						
White[d]	51	19.5%	50	22.3%	0	0.0%
Black[d]	18	6.9	18	8.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	161	61.7	149	66.5	11	31.4
Asian[d]	24	9.2	6	2.7	18	51.4
Other[d,e]	7	2.7	1	0.4	6	17.1
No data reported	67		62		4	
Age						
17 or younger	60	22.5%	58	25.2%	0	0.0%
18-24	91	34.1	85	37.0	6	17.6
25-34	88	33.0	79	34.3	9	26.5
35 or older	28	10.5	8	3.5	19	55.9
No data reported	61		56		5	
Citizenship						
U.S. citizen	74	29.6%	73	33.8%	0	0.0%
U.S. national	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Permanent resident	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Undocumented alien	161	64.4	141	65.3	19	59.4
Qualified alien	15	6.0	2	0.9	13	40.6
No data reported	78		70		7	

Note: Of the 112 confirmed human trafficking incidents, 88 contained information on victim characteristics.

[a]Includes three victims who were not classified in the sex or labor trafficking categories.

[b]Characteristics of victims of child sex trafficking incidents were not reported separately because some incidents with multiple victims involved both juveniles and adults.

[c]Percents based on known victims with reported data.

[d]Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

[e]Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and persons of two or more races.

Comparison of suspect and victim characteristics in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

Gender

- Of the 232 incidents for which both suspect and victim information was available, a majority (65%) involved only male suspects and female victims (table 9).
- Of the 32 incidents in which there was no difference between the gender of the suspects and victims, 27 involved female suspects and female victims only.

Citizenship

- Of the 142 incidents with suspect and victim information on citizenship status, 69% involved only citizens. Nineteen incidents involved noncitizen suspect and victims only.
- Seventeen incidents had only citizen suspects and only noncitizen victims.

Race/Hispanic origin

- In 58% of the 187 incidents, suspects and victims were of the same race.

Age

- In 143 (68%) of the 212 incidents with available data on the ages of suspects and victims, all suspects and victims were in different age categories. Of these incidents, 125 involved at least one suspect age 35 or older and at least one victim age 17 or younger (not shown in table).
- In 35 of the 212 incidents, all of the suspects and victims were in the same age category. Over half (51%) of these suspects and victims were age 18 to 24 (not shown in table).

Table 9. Comparison of suspect and victim characteristics in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

	Number of incidents	Percent
Total, with known gender	232	100.0%
All suspects and victims of same gender		
Male	5	2.2
Female	27	11.6
Some suspects and victims of same gender	48	20.7
All suspects and victims of different gender		
Male suspect/female victim	150	64.7
Female suspect/male victim	2	0.9
Total, with known age[a]	212	100.0%
All suspects and victims in same age group	35	16.5
Some suspects and victims in same age group	34	16.0
All suspects and victims in different age group	143	67.5
Total, with known race/Hispanic origin[b]	187	100.0%
All suspects and victims in same group	108	57.8
Some suspects and victims in same group	19	10.2
All suspects and victims in different group	60	32.1
Total, with known citizenship	142	100.0%
All suspects and victims in same group		
U.S. citizens	98	69.0
Non-U.S. citizens	19	13.4
Some suspects and victims in same group	8	5.6
All suspects and victims in different groups	17	12.0

Note: Excludes incidents for which some information on both suspects and victims were not reported.

[a]Age categories were age 17 or younger, 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 or older.

[b]Categories were white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and other.

Arrest and adjudication of suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

- Task forces reported arrest information for 216 of the 543 suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents. Sixty-eight percent of these suspects were arrested at the state level; 26% were arrested at the federal level.
- Task forces provided the details on charges filed against 140 human trafficking suspects. Among those suspects charged with human trafficking, 64% were charged in state courts and a third were charged in federal courts. Four suspects had charges filed against them in both state and federal court systems.
- Task forces reported court adjudication information for 113 human trafficking suspects. For these suspects, over half (61 of 113 suspects) were convicted of some offense, 6 suspects had their case dismissed, and 46 suspects were awaiting adjudication (table 10).
- Sentencing information was reported for 45 human trafficking suspects. During the reporting period, 16 of these suspects (36%) were sentenced to probation, time served, or to prison or jail for less than one year, and 29 (64%) were sentenced to prison or jail for one year or more. Five suspects were sentenced to prison for more than 10 years.

Table 10. Arrest and adjudication of suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents, 2007-08

		Number of sex trafficking suspects			
	All suspects	Total sex trafficking	Child sex trafficking	Number of labor trafficking suspects	Number of confirmed traf-ficking suspects
Number arrested by type of agency					
Total	216	180	68	19	77
State	147	137	59	3	44
Federal	56	31	8	15	28
Both	13	12	1	1	5
Number charged by prosecuting agency					
Total	140	118	47	12	53
State	89	84	38	0	29
Federal	47	30	8	12	24
Both	4	4	1	0	0
Number of suspects by court adjudication outcomes					
Total	113	98	36	9	50
Convicted	61	57	16	3	36
Dismissed	6	3	0	3	1
Pending	46	38	20	3	13
Number of suspects sentenced to probation, jail, or prison					
Total*	45	40	14	4	23
Probation	7	7	1	0	1
Prison/jail					
Time served	4	4	0	0	2
Less than 1 year	5	4	1	1	3
1 to 3 years	13	11	4	1	10
3 to 10 years	11	10	6	1	6
More than 10 years	5	4	2	1	1

Note: Of the 1,229 alleged human trafficking incidents, 127 had data reported on the arresting agency, 87 had data on the prosecuting agency, 64 on court adjudication outcomes, and 24 on sentences imposed.
*Excludes 16 convicted suspects who were awaiting sentencing.

Methodology

As of September 30, 2008, NEU and UI had enrolled 38 federally funded human task forces to report monthly on incidents, suspects, and victims identified and investigated by their task force. The task forces include representatives from federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors, labor regulators/inspection services, victim service providers, other non-governmental agencies, and mental health providers.

The task forces involve partnerships with varying coverage areas, including entire states/territories (6) and regions, multiple counties, single counties, and metropolitan areas (32). Combined, the task forces represented areas that covered nearly 25% of the nation's resident population at midyear 2008. Although the task forces are not representative of the entire nation, they are widely dispersed geographically (figure 1).

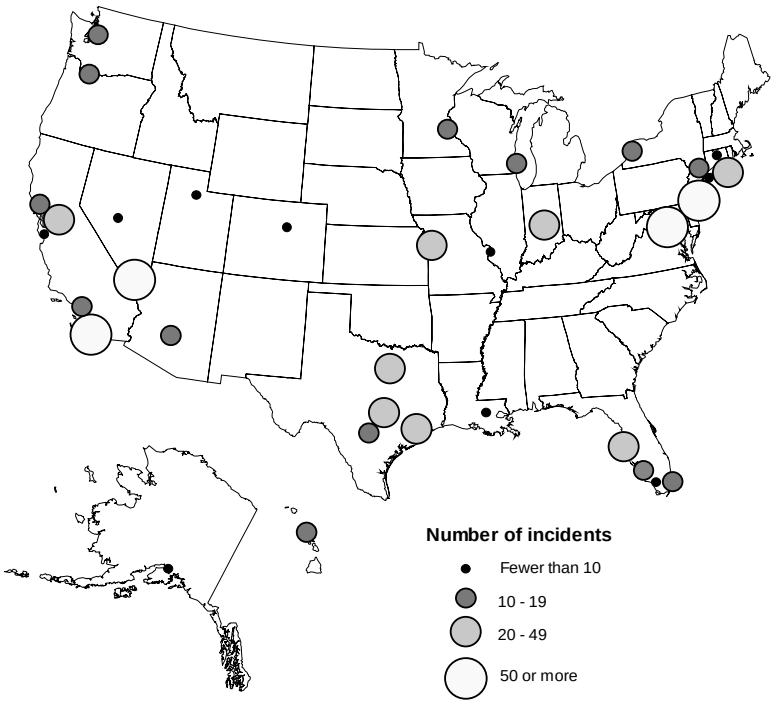
The number of incident reports submitted by each task force varied widely, ranging from 1 to 348. However, 12 (32%) of the participating task forces reported fewer than 10 cases of suspected human trafficking. Four task forces reported 50 or more cases.

Number of alleged cases of human trafficking	Number of task forces
Fewer than 5	7
5-9	5
10-19	13
20-49	9
50 or more	4

Among the 38 task forces that reported data, 23 reported at least one confirmed case of human trafficking, with nine reporting five or more confirmed cases. The remaining task forces (15) reported only incidents of potential human trafficking.

The distribution of sex and labor trafficking cases varied among task forces, which reflected different organizational characteristics and variations in criminal activity in areas covered by the task forces.

Task force locations and number of reported incidents



Note: Excludes participating task forces in U.S. territories.

Figure 1

Collection procedures

Each task force designated a person for data collection and reporting. Reporters were responsible for adding new human trafficking incidents on a monthly basis, updating information for existing records with new activity, and submitting data automatically through an online data portal. Reporters were provided training and follow-up technical assistance via phone or onsite, as needed, by NEU and UI staff.

Task forces began entering data in January 2008. NEU and UI staff collected retrospective information on all human trafficking incidents, arrests, prosecutions, and incarcerations that occurred in 2007.

Once an investigation produced information about potential suspects or victims, task force reporters were instructed to enter this information into the HTRS. Information for each suspect and each victim was then added by completing automated data entry screens identified as a *Suspect Information Form* or a *Victim Information Form*. Specific screens included basic suspect information, arrest information, prosecution information, basic victim information, victim contact, victim services, and victim current location. As more information became available, task force reporters were asked to update the information on each screen. (For additional detail, see *Human Trafficking Reporting System User's Manual*, http://www.humantraficking.neu.edu.)

Items collected and reported data

Task force reporters enter information about investigations into the HTRS if they have spent at least one hour of investigation time on a potential trafficking case. At the time that data are originally entered into the system, many investigations are still ongoing. As investigations proceed, additional information may become available or the original information may be updated. As a result, the HTRS provides a snapshot of information currently known and reported.

A listing of key items and their coverage provides a snapshot of the investigations as of September 30, 2008 (table 11). Among the numerous items collected in the HTRS, information on the status of the investigation (whether open or closed) was provided for all cases (100%). Items related to the type of human trafficking (97%) and identification of the lead investigating agency (94%) had the highest levels of reported data; items related to the number of known victims (54%), location of the incident (52%), confirmed HT status (42%), and number of known suspects (39%) had the lowest.

Information about characteristics of victims was reported for slightly more than half of the 1,442 victims known to the task forces. Gender (100%) and age (97%) had the highest levels of reported data, while citizenship status (73%) had the lowest.

Information was reported for 543 of the 871 known suspects (62%). Among suspects for whom data were known and reported, gender was nearly always reported (542 suspects). Age (85%) and race/Hispanic origin (81%) were reported less often.

A total of 216 suspects were reported to have been arrested. Of those arrested, 81% were reported to have had charges filed against them. The status of the case (whether convicted, dismissed, or pending) was reported for 52% of the suspects who had been arrested.

Table 11. Reported data for key items in the human trafficking reporting system, September 2008

Selected item	Incidents with reported data	
	Number	Percent
All incidents	1,229	100%
Status (open/closed)	1,229	100
Type of human trafficking	1,195	97
Lead investigating agency	1,160	94
Number of known victims	665	54
Type of location	645	52
Confirmed case (yes/no/pending)	521	42
Number of known suspects	475	39
	Victims with reported data	
	Number	Percent
All known victims	1,442	
Victims with any reported data	775	100%
Gender	775	100
Age	751	97
Race/Hispanic origin	695	90
Citizenship	569	73
	Suspects with reported data	
	Number	Percent
All known suspects	871	
Suspects with any reported data	543	100%
Gender	542	100
Age	460	85
Race/Hispanic origin	438	81
Citizenship	313	58
Type of arrest (Federal/State)	216	40
Arrested suspects	216	100%
Charges filed	175	81
Current status of case	113	52

Incident status

Many incidents believed to involve human trafficking cannot be confirmed by authorities. Because task forces enter information about all incidents that could potentially involve human trafficking, there are some cases in HTRS that may not involve human trafficking. Other cases may remain unconfirmed for an extended period due to their complexity.

While task forces are instructed to update information about the status of investigations monthly, many cases lack complete information. As of September 30, 2008, 78% of the 1,229 incidents reported in the HTRS were still under investigation. Nine percent of all incidents had been confirmed as human trafficking, 10% were pending confirmation, and 23% had been determined to not involve human trafficking. The remaining cases (58%) lacked any information.

To be confirmed as human trafficking, the case must have led to an arrest and been subsequently confirmed by law enforcement or the victims in the case must 1) have had a "continuing presence" requested on their behalf, or 2) have received an endorsement for a *t* or *u* visa application.

Of the 271 closed cases, 213 cases (79%) had "not been confirmed" as human trafficking. The task forces reported that victims refused or failed to cooperate with the investigation in 98 of these cases (46%). In 42 cases (20%), there was an indication of criminal activity other than human trafficking. This activity included prostitution, smuggling, domestic violence, and child abuse. In 54 cases (25%), the accusations were determined to be unfounded, false upon investigation, or lacking sufficient evidence. The remaining cases (9%) were closed for other or unknown reasons.

Reported data and year of occurrence

Incident characteristics and the amount of information reported differed by when the incidents were known to have occurred. Among cases that occurred in the first nine months of 2008, nearly 90% involved an allegation of sex trafficking (table 12). Allegations of forced prostitution accounted for nearly 60% of incidents in 2008, compared to 36% of the reported incidents that occurred in 2007 or earlier. Incidents that occurred in 2008 were also more likely (27%) than incidents that occurred in earlier years (19%) to have been *not confirmed*.

Consistent with the ongoing nature of many human trafficking investigations, reports of incidents that occurred in 2008 were less likely (33%) to include information on the number of known suspects than incidents reported in earlier years (46%). Also, detailed information on suspect characteristics was reported for 55% of known suspects in 2008, compared to 69% of known suspects in earlier years.

In contrast, the amount of reported information on victims did not vary by when the alleged incident occurred. The number of known victims was reported for slightly more than half of the incidents in 2008 (55%) and in earlier years (54%). Detailed information on these victims was reported for 55% of the known victims in 2008, compared to 52% of victims in earlier years.

Improving and expanding HTRS

For purposes of enhancing data quality, UI in collaboration with NEU monitors the data entered by the task forces and provides BJS with a quarterly report on data quality. These reports offer suggestions for potential modifications to the web-based system, target follow-up technical assistance with selected task forces, and provide recommendations for maintaining, improving, and expanding HTRS in the future.

Table 12. Characteristics of alleged human trafficking incidents, by year of occurrence, 2007-08

	Year incident occurred	
	2007 or earlier	2008*
Number of task forces reporting data	35	32
All alleged incidents		
Number of incidents reported	553	676
Investigation status		
Open	79.9%	76.3%
Closed	20.1	23.7
Incident status		
Confirmed human trafficking	12.7%	6.2%
Not human trafficking	18.6	27.1
Pending	6.3	13.0
No data reported	62.4	53.7
Incident type		
Sex trafficking	76.5%	88.1%
Forced prostitution	35.8	58.9
Child sex trafficking	37.6	27.1
Other sex trafficking	3.1	2.1
Labor trafficking	17.2%	7.5%
Other/unknown	6.3%	4.4%
Incidents with known suspects		
Number of incidents	255	220
Percent of all incidents	46.1%	32.5%
Number of known suspects	473	398
Percent of known suspects with any reported data	68.5%	55.0%
Incidents with known victims		
Number of incidents	296	369
Percent of all incidents	53.5%	54.6%
Number of known victims	846	596
Percent of known victims with any reported data	55.1%	51.8%

*Includes 33 alleged incidents for which an investigation was opened during 2008. For these incidents, the year of occurrence was not reported.

Based on data collected between January 1 and September 30, 2008, improvements under consideration include—

- adding a data field to determine if the task force had any new HT incidents during the period (to require active reporting of *no new incidents*);
- increasing the number of required fields and adding *unknown* or *to be determined* options to existing fields (to address the lack of completeness in optional fields);
- encouraging task forces to complete "suspect" or "victim" screens and related topical screens (to obtain more complete case information);
- introducing constraints on data entry (to prevent data entry errors through on-line logic checks).

During 2009 and 2010, UI and NEU staff will continue to provide feedback to the task forces and to introduce modifications to the HTRS to enhance data quality. While the first two years of data collection have concentrated on those cases identified by human trafficking task forces, HTRS will be expanded to included cases outside of task force areas. Researchers at UI and NEU will review state legislation to identify law enforcement agencies that may already be tracking human trafficking cases, survey state statistical analysis centers, and then develop a detailed plan for expanded coverage. The expansion is expected by January 2010.

Definitions

For purposes of the HTRS, human trafficking is defined as—

> *The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for one of three purposes:*
>
> *Labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery*
>
> *A commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion*
>
> *Any commercial sex act, if the person is under 18 years of age, regardless of whether any form of coercion is involved.*

The HTRS is an incident-based data collection system. An incident is defined as—

> *Any investigation into a claim of human trafficking, or any investigation of other crimes in which elements of potential human trafficking were identified.*
>
> *An investigation is any effort in which members of the task force spent at least one hour investigating (e.g., collecting information, taking statements, and writing reports).*

Each incident is uniquely identified by an incident date (date of occurrence) and incident number. Once entered into the system, an incident upon further investigation may or may not be determined to involve human trafficking. All incidents, regardless of outcome, are retained in HTRS.

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This BJS Special Report presents the first release of findings from the Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS) data collection program.

Tracey Kyckelhahn, Allen J. Beck, and Thomas H. Cohen wrote the report. Donald Farole verified the report.

The Institute on Race and Justice at Northeastern University (NEU) and the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute (UI) designed and implemented the Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS). Amy Farrell, Jack McDevitt, and Stephanie Fahy designed and presently operate the system and William Adams, Seri Irazola, and Colleen Owens at the Urban Institute provided assistance, ongoing technical support, and data quality management.

Jill Duncan and Georgette Walsh edited the report. Tina Dorsey produced the report and Jayne Robinson prepared the report for final printing, under the supervision of Doris J. James.

January 2009, NCJ 224526

This report in portable document format and in ASCII and its related statistical data and tables are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cshti08.htm>.

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