

## Editorial

Here is the first (regular) issue of the year 2023 of the *Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence* (JHEC) with new contributions on these three crimes.

The first article is authored by Erika Miyamoto (University of Barcelona) and deals with the topic of ‘comfort women’ and gender persecution in international law. The issue of ‘comfort women’ – around 200,000 women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II – has been a topic of global concern for decades. Justice and reparations for these women have been very slow in coming due to the complexity of the legal and political problems and the limited understanding of the gendered nature of these crimes. Miyamoto’s article explores to what extent the more recent development of international law concerning gender persecution can contribute to promote the right to justice and reparation of these women who have suffered from such persecution.

The second contribution is from Muiread Murphy (Maynooth University) who discusses prevention of human trafficking, in particular by examining the perceptions of European State and non-State stakeholders concerning awareness levels and awareness raising initiatives. Along with desktop research, fifty-three semi-structured interviews were used to capture the views of labour inspectors, trade unionists, law enforcement personnel, government officials and non-governmental organisation representatives. The analysis shows that the understanding of human trafficking, by both professionals and society at large, continues to be shaped by discussions focusing on sexual exploitation. Murphy argues that this enduring narrow interpretation of the offence means that other forms of exploitation are therefore not getting equal recognition. This, in turn, has consequences for victims of human trafficking, beyond sexual exploitation, who are not receiving the support and assistance that they are entitled to. The author calls for a more comprehensive approach to awareness campaigns in order to combat and eradicate human trafficking in all its forms.

The third article is from Jerome Elam (human trafficking survivor leader and CEO of Trafficking in America Task Force) who writes about the recently adopted OSCE/ODIHR<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice for Ensuring the Rights of Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking (2023); a code that came about due to Elam’s earlier idea of a Victim and Survivor’s Bill of Rights. The Code of Practice is an extension of existing policies on protecting victims and survivors; it offers specific guidance to OSCE Member States in the treatment, engagement and empowerment of victims and survivors of human trafficking and is based on the lived experiences of survivors themselves. The Code of Practice seeks to minimise any additional trauma imparted upon victims and survivors upon their engagement with anti-trafficking stakeholders, including governmental

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<sup>1</sup> The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

organisations, the media and civil society. The Code of Practice furthermore offers recommendations for gender sensitive, disability sensitive, cultural and religious considerations to be employed by the anti-trafficking community. The role of survivor leaders is highlighted by the Code of Practice and OSCE Member States are advised to foster the inclusion of survivor leaders in the development and refurbishment of legislation, policies and protocols for addressing the crime of human trafficking. Elam underscores the unique nature of the Code of Practice in that it uses the lived experience of survivor leaders in fighting the crime of human trafficking.

The fourth and final contribution concerns ‘Children Born of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Review of Interdisciplinary Responses to Their Needs and Experiences’. It is written by Cecilia Agino Foussiakda (Université de Liège; Université Evangélique en Afrique), Kimberley Anderson (University of Amsterdam; Foundation Children Born of War Project), Laura Pasquero (Université de Genève), and Adélaïde Blavier (Université de Liège). In this submission the authors write about the state-of-the-art on interventions, particularly by humanitarian practitioners, to support children born of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and their families. They found that the experiences of children born of CRSV include psychological, economic, medical, and legal aspects and that responses to their needs include food aid, medical care, housing assistance, financial support for the mothers of children born of CRSV, and therapeutic games and counselling. However, these responses remain insignificant and partial, and are very often only implemented in one setting (ie psychological, economic, medical or legal). The authors argue that children born of CRSV are a special population, both because of the context in which they were conceived, and because of the experiences they face. To deal with the complexity of their situation and thus respond effectively to their holistic needs, they submit that various actors must work in synergy.

We hope you enjoy the read and get inspired to (continue to) prevent and address these crimes.