



Human Trafficking and the CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

by the
AMSSND Human Trafficking Committee

Did You Know...?

1. Disruptions to local services, housing and economic stability, and social disconnection [increase risk for victimization and exploitation](#).
2. Though there are already hundreds of thousands of [child victims of sexual exploitation](#) in the United States, [children are at increased risk](#) of sexual abuse and online exploitation during this pandemic due to increased screen time, lack of options for socialization and entertainment, and economic desperation that may drive parents to exploit their children.
3. [Low-income and undocumented workers](#) who are laid off are extremely vulnerable to both labor and sex trafficking—they will be pressured to take jobs that may be exploitative or off-the-books, with no legal or health protections, or to exchange sexual services for housing and other necessities.
4. Children living in isolated, remote areas and in refugee settings—such as the migrant camps at the U.S. southern border—are extremely vulnerable. Offenders hunt for easy victims and marginalized children are prime targets.
5. Due to social distancing requirements, many shelters have limited space or are no longer accepting new clients. It has become more challenging to connect victims who reach out for help with local resources.

What Can You Do?

1. [Urge your representatives](#) to prioritize marginalized communities in their responses to the pandemic.
2. Learn more about [ways to protect yourself or your children online](#).
3. Please call 1 (888) 373-7888 or text “BeFree” (233733) if you are experiencing unwanted sexual contact online, or if you feel unable to leave a situation where someone has forced you to make unwanted sexual contact, or if you feel desperate for work and think you might be experiencing exploitation.
4. [Donate to organizations](#) that support trafficking victims and survivors—e.g. [Beyond Borders](#), our partner in Haiti.
5. Lower the demand! Try to [purchase sustainably sourced goods](#) and [oppose the use of pornography](#).

A Prayer for Human Trafficking during the Pandemic

Loving God, we remember that Jesus said to the Apostles shortly after the Resurrection, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” We come now asking for your blessing as we engage in solidarity and justice for victims of human trafficking. We pray for marginalized communities and those vulnerable to human trafficking: may they be touched by hope and find the resources they need to overcome the dangers. We pray for wisdom for parents and teachers as they oversee the online activity of our children: may they have the foresight and attention to protect and educate. Encourage governments to enact laws and the means to enforce them for the protection of our vulnerable young students against online exploitation and to rectify the systemic injustices that perpetuate vulnerabilities. Inspire corporations to produce technology that keeps the internet and social media from harmful uses. Lead us “to risk innovative responses as educators in a rapidly changing world impacted by globalization and technology.” We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

