



AWARENESS

THE NARCOTICS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONNECTION

Illicit drugs and human trafficking are both considered heinous crimes around the world. However, many people fail to recognise that these two often occur together and that it is important to consider the role that each play in the proliferation of the other. This is a case of two “evils” feeding off and strengthening one another, according to global crime-fighting authorities.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit”. People of all backgrounds, all ages, races, and genders fall victim to this crime, which happens in every part of the world, according to the UNODC.

Where do the drugs come in?

Illegal drugs and human trafficking happen together because drug traffickers will often transport people illegally as “another source of money”, explains Jose Luis Vazquez Martinez, in a post published by the International Society of Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Professionals (UK), Martinez explains that human traffickers will also force their victims to smuggle drugs across borders or use drugs to make their victims more cooperative or dependant on them.

“Human traffickers can use drugs as “bait” to recruit people who have a substance use disorder. Or they can use drugs to force a victim to obey their orders, or work harder or for longer hours”, warns the National Institute of Drug Abuse (US) explaining that anyone can become addicted to drugs.

Acting locally

South Africa is considered a “major key market destination for human trafficking around the world”, according to a media statement released by the South African Government.

According to global anti-trafficking initiative, Disrupt Human Trafficking, we can all do our part to minimise human trafficking by donating to the cause, spreading the word and raising awareness on social media and other platforms or organising a fundraiser or social event to help “support the fight”.

If you have any information you would like to share about human trafficking, call the South African National Human Trafficking Hotline 0800 222 777 taking calls 24/7.