

# KEY JUDGEMENTS



Title: **Organ trafficking business in Türkiye**

Country/ Location: **Türkiye : Baclar, Esenyurt, Bahçelievler, Beylikdüzü, Bayrampaa, Fatih, and Zeytinburnu.**

Issue Number: **001**

Date: **25.11.2022**

## INTRODUCTION:

- Türkiye is a global organ trafficking hotspot. This is enabled by a severe organ shortage, the exploitation of refugees, migrants and others in severe financial duress, and a high level of medical and transplant tourism.
- Trafficking and exploitation of persons for the purpose of removing an organ for transplant remain a threat in Türkiye, particularly in the Istanbul area where criminal brokers can 'game' the regulatory safeguards on kinship often via falsified foreign government documentation.
- Transplant operations flourish largely within existing health structures through deception and corruption.
- The market relies upon demand from wealthy purchasers in need of surgery; a network to connect them to the illicit surgery; and most importantly a large pool of young, healthy potential donors. These exist in large numbers in Türkiye as large numbers of migrants and refugees are stuck there, often requiring the means to progress their journeys and demand appears vibrant.
- Financial transaction patterns may offer new opportunities to identify crimes in action.

## WE ASSESS AS FOLLOWS:

### A) LOCATIONS:

- The following areas in Istanbul are vulnerable to organ trafficking activity: **Baclar, Esenyurt, Bahçelievler, Beylikdüzü, Bayrampaa, Fatih, and Zeytinburnu.**

### B) VICTIM PROFILE:

- Refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors are particularly at risk of organ trafficking. Another identified vulnerable group is university students reaching Türkiye based on bilateral agreements between universities. Arabic speakers are being especially targeted by organ traffickers

### C) PERPETRATOR PROFILE:

- Criminal actors involved in organ trafficking are most often individuals with strong connections to the medical sector. Criminal actors in this domain often are/were doctors or medical staff.

### D) FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

- Financial transactions are usually the province of the broker and can break down as follows in respect of kidney donors/transplants:
- US \$15,000 to the transplant clinic from unusual brokers, particularly from third countries (recent examples suggest Palestinian / Jordanian brokers)
- The payment to the donor is likely to be conducted by the broker and whilst it is likely to be considerably less than the US\$10,000 promised, donors are likely to receive \$2,000 plus into accounts that generally see very small routine transactions.
- Brokers retain around US\$25,000 of the overall \$50,000 fee, which is likely to originate internationally.

## FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Amongst the 'stuck' communities, particularly the young, there is the constant offer of significant sums of **US Dollars** for those who chose to have surgery for the removal of transplantable body parts. Kidneys and eye parts are very desirable.
- Organ traffickers approach potential victims face-to-face, but **recruitment online** is particularly common.
- **Surgical procedures** for donors are often fast, without appropriate aftercare and routinely resulting in the donor receiving only a percentage of the promised fee.
- **Regulations** regarding the relationship requirements between donor and recipient are generally covered with fraudulently obtained and/or falsified documents. A recent example involved [fraudulent Palestinian embassy documents](#). The ring uncovered in the 2022 [Storm Makers operation](#) also staged wedding photos.

## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS (What we need to know):

- 1) Any information regarding victims who had surgery, including details of broker and clinic and details of payments (e.g., PayPal or Cash?)
- 2) Information related to recruitment methods and vetting processes used by the brokers or their networks

3) Current documentation processes for meeting kinship regulations.

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