

# KEY JUDGEMENTS JUNE 2023

**Title:** Organ Trafficking in Türkiye

**Location:** Türkiye

**Issue Number:** 004

**Date:** 19.06.2023

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that this assessment is based on a combination of open-source research, input from subject matter experts on the ground, survivor accounts, and data analysis.*

## INTRODUCTION

There is a leading market for trafficking for the purpose of organ removal in Türkiye. Traffickers particularly target migrants and refugees. Around 10% of Syrian refugees in Istanbul have received or seen offers to buy their organs. Social media remains a prime recruitment platform. The organ trafficking trade relies on forged kinship documents, generally forged in embassies or translation offices in Türkiye.

## WE ASSESS AS FOLLOWS

### RECRUITMENT

- a) There remains a strong market for organ removal /sale for transplant, with around 10% of Syrian refugees in Istanbul having received or seen offers to buy organs.
- b) Reported locations for organ transplants include; Istanbul (Esenyurt, Beylikduzu, Fatih), Ankara, Antalya, Adana, Izmir, and Southeast Türkiye.
- c) Donor-victim profile includes:
  - Common nationalities: Syrian, Jordanian, Indonesian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Iraqi.
  - Victim donors are often males aged 20-30, who live in poverty and were forcibly displaced.
  - Victim donors often are not registered and do not have a Kimlik (ID card). Traffickers target unregistered refugees and obtain a fake Kimlik ID.
  - If the donor is recruited in the country of origin, donors are known to sell their organs in exchange for transport to Türkiye. Refugees and migrants recruited in Türkiye regularly use the money from organ donations to pay smugglers for travel to Europe.

## RECRUITMENT CONT.

### d) Recruitment tactics:

- Traffickers commonly recruit victims via social media platforms in Türkiye and in origin countries. Popular platforms include Telegram, Facebook (groups and group chats), Twitter, Instagram, IMO and WhatsApp. Advertisements and Facebook pages used for recruitment are often in Arabic.
- Recruiters manipulate victims and persuade them to donate their organs to save someone's life, presenting organ donation as a good and honourable thing to do.

e) Brokers choose hotels for donors/victims in the vicinity of hospitals to have control over the victims.

## DEMAND

a) There is an active market for organ trafficking in Türkiye founded on the ability of errant medical tourism brokers to obtain falsified kinship documentation. Kinship documentation is necessary to satisfy medical ethics boards at the hospital concerned.

b) Regarding forged kinship documentation to get past the hospital ethics boards:

- The relation must be proved by the relevant embassy/ consulate. Apparently, official kinship documentation issued by the Iraqi and Palestinian embassies in Türkiye has been used. Translated documents from Turkish translation offices in Adan have also been used to form part of the evidence package.
- The government body only asks for a copy of the kinship documents. This is why it is easy to forge them.
- Documents are forged for both the recipient and the donor. The recipient and the donor are always given the same nationality. Generally, at least one of the nationalities is false.
- A fake wedding and family photos are used.
- Legally, an organ recipient must be a relative of the patient up to the fourth degree of separation. The third degree of separation is the most common form of forged relationship in organ trafficking cases. (third degree is aunt/uncle/niece/nephew; fourth degree are children of the third degree).

c) Organ trafficking networks include the following elements: a person who forges the documents; a translator; a person at the hospital who mixes forged documents, among others, to look less suspicious.

## MONEY

a) Legal organ transplants cost approximately \$18,000 USD (kidney) and \$45,000 USD (liver). Any considerable deviation from these prices is indicative of organ trafficking.

b) The organ trafficking victim is generally deceived by the broker and is paid much less than the initially agreed-upon price. While the victim is originally offered around \$25,000 - \$30,000 USD, they are usually only paid around \$2,000 - \$3,200 USD.

c) Forged documents (marriage/birth/kinship certificates) cost about \$200.

d) Victims might receive \$500 USD for referring another potential victim.

## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

1) How are organ recipients connected with the trafficking networks? Information about medical tourism brokers.

2) In which clinics and private hospitals have illicit transplants taken place?

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