

Policing Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex in Kiribati

Abstract

Human trafficking and using girls for commercial sex is a global phenomenon that is adversely affecting all countries, irrespective of its size and background. Kiribati is not an exception to this. The field of study on criminology considers human trafficking as criminal behaviour that breaks society's criminal law. As far as Kiribati's context is concerned, human traffickers target young girls for leisure and commercial sex purposes by foreign fishing vessel crews. Notably, police intervention is critical to address the growing problem of human trafficking and commercial sex in Kiribati. Unfortunately, the lack of government policies on identifying and protecting trafficked victims limits the work police can undertake to address this transnational crime. This study uses the Southern criminological agenda to argue the reasons behind the rising problem of human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. It also explores the official response of the Kiribati Police Service (KPS) to human trafficking and commercial sex crimes and the challenges Kiribati's law enforcement bodies face in addressing these transnational crimes.

Keywords: Criminological Dynamics, Human Trafficking, Commercial Sex

Dr Suwastika Naidu is currently employed as a Senior Lecturer at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands. Her research interest areas are gender issues, entrepreneurship, workplace bullying, and harassment. She has completed her Master of Commerce in Management and Public Administration from the University of the South Pacific, MSc in Finance (Economic Policy) from the University of London, M.Ed. from Northern Arizona University, and PhD from the University of the South Pacific.

Professor Arvind Patel: is currently working as a Professor in Accounting and Financial Management at the University of the South Pacific. His research interest areas are transnational financial crime and forensic accounting. He has completed

his PhD from the University of Queensland in financial management, accounting, and auditing.

Dr Atishwar Pandaram: is currently working as a Lecturer at the University South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands. His research interest areas are organisational behaviour, small business management, workplace bullying, and harassment. He has completed his PhD at the University of Wollongong.

Professor Anand Chand: is currently working as a Professor at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands. His research interests are in organisational behaviour, small business management, workplace bullying, and harassment.

1.0 Introduction

Human trafficking and commercial sex crimes have become an increasingly important human right problem in all Pacific Island Countries (PICs) (Vyas *et al.*, 2020; Emmers *et al.*, 2006). It involves the trade of humans for forced labour, commercial sex exploitation, and sexual slavery (Bales, 2007). Kiribati is not an exception to this issue. In retrospect, the increasing problem of human trafficking in Kiribati can be easily linked to the colonial period when the first Spanish whalers and coconut oil producers reached the Gilbert Islands and Banaba (Vyas *et al.*, 2020; Morris & Klikauer, 2001). These islands are now known as Kiribati. During the 19th century, locals were trafficked from the Gilbertese Islands, a part of Kiribati, to work in the regional plantations. This started regional trafficking whereby locals were coerced to work in regional plantations under poor working conditions (Vyas *et al.*, 2020; Morris & Klikauer, 2001). The landmass of Kiribati is small as when compared to the population that currently resides in Kiribati. There are 33 islands that form the Republic of Kiribati, out of which only 20 are inhabited. Kiribati has a population of around 50,000 (World Bank, 2021; BBC News, 2021). According to the United Nations office on drugs and crime (2020), human trafficking is the recruitment and transfer of people by force and deception to exploit these individuals for profit. Commercial sex involves the exchange of money for providing sexual services in return (WHO, 2020).

Researchers have confirmed that the major reasons behind the trafficking of girls, women, and members of the minority groups are poverty, lack of opportunities for progress, family pressure, and traditional family beliefs (Winterdyk, 2020; Moretti, 2021). As far as Kiribati's case is concerned, the trafficking of young girls for commercial sex purposes is driven by the country's economic pressure that coerces individuals to engage in human trafficking and commercial sex crimes (Kennedy *et al.*, 2020; Moretti, 2021). Limited landmass makes it easier for boat travellers to traffick individuals out from Kiribati's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to rich developed countries where these human beings are treated as products ready to be consumed by the final users (Kennedy *et al.*, 2020). Kiribati has one of the largest EEZ's in the world, covering 3 550 000 km² (MACBIO, 2021). According to UNICEF (2008), most human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati occur as travellers connect to Kiribati via sea transportation. Some of the reasons highlighted by UNICEF (2008) on the reasons behind human trafficking in Kiribati are lack of infrastructure to monitor the movement of boats across Kiribati's EEZ, limited

programs on capacity building of police officers, inadequate legislation and law enforcement, increasing demand for low-cost labour, and the existence of high unemployment and poverty rates. There are several reasons documented in the existing literature that explains the reasons why commercial sex activities has increased globally. These factors include physical abuse, sexual abuse, homelessness, discussions annoy development, and psychogenic factors (The National Academy of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, 2013; Benoit & Unsworth, 2021).

Undoubtedly, the role played by the Government of Kiribati, Kiribati Police Service (KPS), and national and regional institutions has always been critical in addressing transnational crime not only in Kiribati but across the PICs (Marks & Hughes, 2020). A critical assessment of the Government of Kiribati's work to address the rising problem of human trafficking and commercial sex activities has come under close scrutiny by regional Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). According to UNCHR (2016), Kiribati's Government has invested minimal effort to strengthen the laws on human trafficking and commercial sex crimes. The Government of Kiribati and NGOs have presented two opposing views on the extent to which the 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' can be used to address the rising problem of human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati. According to Kiribati's Government, the 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' can be used to execute cases on internal human trafficking (International Centre for Non-Profit Law, 2021). However, NGOs have criticised Kiribati's government by arguing that the 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' cannot look into cases on internal human trafficking, as this legislation recognises human trafficking as a transnational crime that requires an outsider to enter Kiribati's national boundary.

To the best of our understanding, the KPS's efforts to control the rising number of cases of human trafficking and commercial sex activities have been constrained by internal and external factors that inhibit the KPS from achieving its maximum potential (Government of Kiribati, 2003). A close analysis of the literature on the role of KPS in controlling human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati indicates that there are hardly any cases investigated on these types of transnational crime (UNICEF, 2008). Statistics available on human trafficking and commercial sex activities show that in the year 2000, around 80 young commercial sex workers visited boats in ports (UNICEF, 2008). Children and young commercial sex workers in Kiribati

exchange sex mainly for cash, but they also accept foreign goods, such as alcohol, clothes, and small gifts (UNICEF, 2008).

This book chapter has been divided into six sections. Section two examines the problem of human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. Section three maps out the human trafficking chain of Kiribati by using the lenses of the Southern Criminology Perspective. Section four discusses the KPS's official response to human trafficking and commercial sex activities. Section five provides Kiribati's law enforcement challenges to human trafficking and commercial sex crimes. Section six provides recommendations for KPS for addressing this transnational crime.

2.0 The Problem of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex in Kiribati

Kiribati is one of the developing countries whereby girls, children and women are at high risk of trafficked, sexually abused and used for commercial sex purposes (Chen, 2014; Holmes, 2010). Most local women, girls and children are exploited by foreigners, mainly by visiting ship crew members who target locals for sex trafficking (UNHCR, 2016). Unfortunately, locals fall easy prey as Kiribati is a struggling small island developing country constrained by economic resources (Naidu & Chand, 2018; UNICEF, 2017). Due to the lack of availability of land and natural resources, most of the products consumed in Kiribati are imported from foreign countries (Naidu & Chand, 2018; UNHCR, 2016). Foreigners visiting Kiribati for tourism or work-related purposes can easily lure children, women, and girls with inexpensive foreign items to engage in commercial sex activities. According to UNHCR (2016), i-Kiribati girls who may be as young as 15 years of age might face sex trafficking in local bars and hotels. Due to lack of family income, some family members are also involved in commercial sex with minors as older family members may be using minors for commercial sex purposes (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998). Most human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati are not reported to local authorities as most families livelihood depends on income from commercial sex activities. In return for providing entertainment and leisure activities for foreign travellers in ports, girls receive food, alcohol and financial support in return (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998).

Furthermore, NGOs have criticised Kiribati's government for failing to meet the minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking and commercial sex activities (OSCA, 2021). However, Kiribati's government is making significant efforts to identify these criminal activities and address them before the problem gets bigger. A strong intervention from the KPS is needed

to identify, trace, and prosecute all parties involved in human trafficking (OSCA, 2021). Currently, the KPS's work is constrained by the lack of technology, skilled workforce, infrastructure, resources, and motivated police officers (OSCA, 2021). All these components of KPS delivery have to be in order and proper working condition to help police officers to identify, trace and prosecute parties involved in human trafficking (UNHCR, 2016).

Undoubtedly, the Government of Kiribati has provided antitrafficking training to the local police officers. There have been numerous outreach programs designed on sexual violence, exploitation, and developing counselling guidelines for educating children on trafficking activities in Kiribati. Unfortunately, these programs are yet to realise their full potential and benefits because there is a lack of effort and commitment from the public to trace this crime and identify strategies for addressing it (OSCA, 2021; UNHCR, 2016). Another reason why the rising number of cases of human trafficking and commercial sex activities is becoming a growing concern is that there are many loopholes identified in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act of Kiribati (OSCA, 2021; UNHCR, 2016). A local NGO bordered that as many as 20 i-Kiribati young girls are exploited for commercial sex activities in local bars and hotels at any point in time. This study was based on a limited sample and highlighted that there is a lack of data on the number of individuals subject to human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati (US Department of State, 2015). These penalties stipulated in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act of Kiribati are not stringent to address the rising problem of human trafficking (OSCA, 2021).

Additionally, a close analysis of the cases reported on human trafficking in Kiribati confirms that there are hardly any cases reported and prosecuted by the justice system (OSCA, 2021). There is very limited knowledge available in the existing literature about how the governments are responding to the current issues and what can be done to improve the existing processes in place (UNHCR, 2016).

3.0 Human Trafficking & Commercial Sex Chain of Kiribati: A Southern Criminology Perspective

The negative effects of globalisation are evident in the escalating number of transnational crimes experienced by countries worldwide. Globally, cultures are interconnected through the exchange of labour, high internet speed, and mass marketing (Franko, 2019; Okech *et al.*, 2018). In these environments, it is easy to meet international consumer demands by transporting

commodities from one geographical area to another (Carrington *et al.*, 2018). Unfortunately, in human trafficking and commercial sex activities, humans are transported from poor regions to wealthy regions worldwide for leisure and entertainment purposes (Carrington *et al.*, 2018). Global Southern Criminology's rural dimension explains colonisation's role in shaping the extent to which criminal activities occur in a region (Scott *et al.*, 2018). A thorough exploration of the historical literature on human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati identifies that the start of this type of transnational crime can be traced back to the arrival of the first Spanish whalers and coconut oil producers to Gilbert and Banaba Islands (The Commonwealth, 2021; Thomas, 2009).

At the start of the 19th century, the Gilbert Islanders were trafficked to work in the plantations under poor working conditions. During this period, the Gilbert Islanders were faced with the worst forms of harassment, slavery, and sexual harassment that they had never experienced before (The Commonwealth, 2021; Thomas, 2009). The Gilbert Islands became the British protectorate in 1892 and achieved their independence in 1979. After its independence, the Gilbert Islands were named Kiribati. After independence, Kiribati started participating in international trade, whereby most of its products sold in the domestic markets for consumption were imported as this country's domestic production is constrained by the lack of availability of natural resources (The Commonwealth, 2021; Thomas, 2009). The current problem of human trafficking and commercial sex activities faced by i-Kiribati is worsened due to high unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty, and high crime rate (The Commonwealth, 2021; Thomas, 2009). Undoubtedly, the contemporary problems related to cultural, political, social, and economic exploitation faced by i-Kiribati resulted from the past colonial practices that have disadvantaged rural communities, minority groups, and the poor (Donnermeyer, 2017).

3.1 Social Capital and Rural Dimension of Global South Criminology

One of the key aspects of human trafficking is the intermediary that links the point of origin to the destination where products will be delivered (Kleemans & Van de Bunt, 2003). In Kiribati, victims of human trafficking who are trafficked for commercial sex exploitation activities are mainly from ailing areas of the economy (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998). These victims struggle to provide a living for their families as most of them are uneducated and lack the technical

skills to find employment (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998). The social organisation that provides the link between the trafficked victims and the foreigners who connect to Kiribati through sea transportation know where to find the vulnerable groups who can easily be lured into commercial sex activities. Victims of human trafficking used for commercial sex activities in foreign vessels are treated as tradeable objectives (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998). They provide entertainment and pleasure in return for money and tradable goods. It is common for the victims of human trafficking to be easily lured by foreign items as hardly any goods are produced in the domestic economy (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998).

Furthermore, the social capital concept of human trafficking is a multidisciplinary concept that can be applied to understand human trafficking in Kiribati. Different disciplines have used the social capital concept to understand a phenomenon or provide meaning to research questions. According to Portes (1998), transnational crimes involving human trafficking and commercial sex activities relies on value or benefit from a network that relies fundamentally on trust and reciprocity. The Global Southern Criminology's rural dimension argues that victims from ailing rural areas in Kiribati are supplied to end-user customers from urban areas. This phenomenon is common for both internal and external human trafficking activities. The fundamental rural-urban connection that exists due to context dependencies and inequalities is reflected in figure one (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998).

Insert figure 1

Figure one shows that victims of human trafficking move to urban areas in search of job opportunities. The social organisation that links traffickers to trafficked victims can easily identify these victims and lure them to foreign vessels. The commercial sex workers who enter foreign vessels either return after entertaining and satisfying foreigners or are trafficked to other parts of the world (UNHCR, 2016; Ahlburg & Jensen, 1998). There are several ways how his book chapter contributes to the gap in the Southern literature under inquiry. First, there are only a handful of studies that have used the social capital concept of human trafficking to explain the mapping of human trafficking in the small island developing countries. This book chapter makes the first attempt to do so by explaining how the social organisations in Tarawa Betio ports links the trafficked victims to the foreign fishing vessels where the exploitation takes place. Second, this chapter also tries to explain the specific channels where police intervention is needed to break the supply and demand of trafficked victims in Kiribati. To the best of our understanding, none of the existing studies has intergrated Global Southern Criminology's rural dimension to explain how police interventin can break the human trafficking chain in the small island developing countries.

4.0 Kiribati Police Services Official Response to Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex Crimes

The KPS has provided a limited response to human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati. Undoubtedly, a thorough examination of cases encountered by the court reflects hardly any cases on human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati (Government of Kiribati, 2019). Although anecdotal evidence exists on human trafficking in Kiribati, concrete data needs to be collected to confirm this transnational crime's degree of existence. The KPS records indicate numerous cases whereby women were arrested for boarding foreign fishing vessels (Government of Kiribati, 2019). These cases are easily struck out in the court as the KPS cannot lay charges against women who board shipping vessels (Government of Kiribati, 2019). Once women acquire clearance from the boarding inspection party, they have full right to board the fishing vessels. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD) has issued licenses to foreign fishing vessels with restrictions on boarding fishing vessels to address this problem

directly. It is mentioned in the license that it is the responsibility of the Master or Operator of the ship to ensure that no one shall board the foreign fishing vessel while the vessels are in Kiribati's port except for authorised officer as stipulated under the Fisheries Act 2010 (Government of Kiribati, 2019). This Act also requires that a local security guard be recruited to monitor foreign fishing vessels' boarding activities.

Additionally, the Maritime Act 2017 requires the foreign fishing owners to declare in writing that foreign fishing vessel will not be used for smuggling of people, human trafficking, commercial sex activities, and unlawful transportation of refugees (Government of Kiribati, 2019). The Employment, Industrial Relations Act of Kiribati outlines the circumstances and ages at which children should work. Additionally, it also confers children's rights and provides protection to vulnerable children who are likely to be exploited. It also prohibits child labour and engagement of children in slavery, prostitution, trafficking and pornography (Government of Kiribati, 2019).

On the contrary, the international bodies have presented a critical assessment of the work done by KPS and Kiribati's Government to combat human trafficking and commercial sex activities. According to UNHCR (2016), the KPS alone cannot coordinate national antitrafficking efforts. The Government of Kiribati has made limited efforts to enforce law and order to combat human trafficking. There are several criticisms of the national law designed to combat human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. The perpetrators of human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati can be prosecuted under the 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' as stated by Kiribati's government. According to this law, human trafficking requires another person to enter Kiribati as it a transnational offence. However, the government made claims that internal human trafficking can be easily prosecuted under this Act when there is no provision in the Act related to internal human trafficking. According to UNCHR (2016), the statute on external human trafficking cannot be used to prosecute cases on internal human trafficking. Kiribati's government and UNCHR (2016) has acknowledged that there are hardly any cases reported that can be classified as domestic human trafficking cases. The Employment and Industrial Relations Code (2015) of Kiribati criminalises prostitution and imposes a fine on prostitution and forced labour. According to UNCHR (2016), penalties for human trafficking of children is not substantially like rape. These penalties must be revised to stop human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati.

5.0 Kiribati's Law Enforcement Challenges

All developed and developing countries face challenges while implementing anti-human trafficking and commercial sex laws and regulations. In Kiribati, the perpetrators of human trafficking are successful because the probability of getting caught is very low (UNHCR, 2016). This phenomenon is not unique to Kiribati but to all countries around the world. The recent statistics on the number of human trafficking cases reported in Kiribati indicates that there are hardly any cases of human trafficking and commercial sex activities reported in Kiribati. These activities are visible in the public setting, but the number of cases identified and executed is close to zero. In Kiribati, the victims of human trafficking are fully protected by law, but these cases are not reported to police for investigation and enquiry (UNHCR, 2016). The law system of any country should allow for a clear interpretation of human trafficking cases. In case there is a lack of clarity in anti-human trafficking laws, these laws should be revised to account for developments in crime experienced by i-Kiribati. The Government of Kiribati and UNCHR (2016) has provided a complete counter assessment of the 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' (UNHCR, 2016).

According to Kiribati's government, both internal and external human trafficking can be easily prosecuted by this law. However, the UNCHR (2016) has made it clear that this law cannot prosecute domestic human trafficking cases. It recognises that human trafficking is a transnational crime that involves the entry of a foreign individual into Kiribati's border (UNHCR, 2016). As far as internal human trafficking is concerned, individuals do not enter international borders as human trafficking occurs within the country. The differences in the law's perception in Kiribati will influence how human trafficking laws are interpreted and implemented to protect the victims (UNHCR, 2016). These interpretations will influence how the officers perceive human trafficking and how these officers identify, report, and investigate these crimes. Kiribati's government also needs to invest resources in the crime control incentives to encourage a faster completion of investigations (UNHCR, 2016). Incentivising the public to report crime related to human trafficking and commercial sex to police is another good way to alert the public on this crime's seriousness.

Additionally, the implementation of the laws on human trafficking and commercial sex requires local departments and authorities to identify and report human trafficking and commercial sex

activities (UNHCR, 2016). However, Kiribati's government has made very little effort to collaborate with local agencies to trace and identify these activities in Kiribati (UNHCR, 2016). Most of the crime that takes place can easily be identified via a proper community effort. It is essential that Kiribati's government divides the major crime-prone areas into several sub-divisions and implement area-specific measures to control the growth in human trafficking and commercial sex activities. Additionally, implementing timely efforts to control human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati requires government support. At the moment, there are several other pressing issues that Kiribati's government must handle as compared to human trafficking and commercial sex activities. Some of these pressing issues are domestic violence, rape and cybersecurity.

6.0 Recommendations for Kiribati's Police Service for Addressing Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex Crimes

Kiribati's Police Service is making efforts to addressing the rising number of human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati. However, these efforts are not sufficient to effectively prepare the police force to respond to these crimes. The following recommendations will equip Kiribati's Police Service with the knowledge, skills, and key competencies to identify and respond to human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati.

1. Training and Development of Police Officers

The police officers in Kiribati need to be provided training on identifying the perpetrators and victims of transnational crime. In transnational crimes whereby victims are forced out of their own country and enter international borders, the police officers should be trained to identify these victims and perpetrators. Undoubtedly, this will involve: (1) providing training on identifying the local social organisation that works with the international parties on human trafficking, (2) tracing the transportation routes of victims, and (3) the exchange of information that takes place between the perpetrators and the victims. The authorities providing training to the police officers need to understand the dynamics behind these types of transnational crime. Unfortunately, there are hardly any training authorities in Kiribati that can provide training of this nature to police officers directly involved in handling human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati. Addressing these

types of crime requires regional integration whereby all PICs collaborate to trace the human trafficking chain that exists across PICs. KPS can work with NGOs and experts in criminology and policing of transnational crimes to provide training to police officers directly involved in handling human trafficking and commercial sex crimes in Kiribati.

2. Strengthening Laws and Enforcement of Laws on Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex

The national laws against human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati are currently limited, and enforcement of these national laws is weak to combat these forms of transnational crime. The Kiribati Police Force (KPF) works with the law and justice system to investigate trafficking offences. Flaws in Kiribati's law and the justice system needs to be addressed so that investigation and prosecution of human trafficking and commercial sex activities could be fast-tracked. Currently, the Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act of 2005 criminalises human trafficking and stipulates penalties up to 15 years for the trafficking of adults and 20 years for trafficking of children. These penalties are stringent but do not commensurate with the penalties stipulated for other forms of serious crime, such as rape. The law and justice system should provide justice to victims and punish perpetrators promptly. The backlog of cases in Kiribati's justice system may hinder the law from taking its full discourse of enforcement to provide justice to the victims of human trafficking who are forced to perform commercial sex activities. Kiribati's justice system needs to closely work with the KPS to fast track cases, reduce bureaucracy, and increase the scope of transnational laws covering human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati.

3. Awareness Campaigns by KPS

It is critical for KPS to launch collaborative campaigns with the church groups, NGOs and Ministry of Women, Youth, and Social Affairs to create awareness on human trafficking and commercial sex issues in Kiribati. Although the KPS operated two hotlines for reporting abuses and harassment, surprisingly, no complaints were received on human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. The KPS should work with local church leaders, community elders, schools, and tertiary institutions to create awareness on how to identify activities related to human

trafficking and commercial sex activities and specific measures that can be taken to report these activities to two 24-hour hotlines.

4. Develop Stringent Procedures for All Players Traced in the Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex Chain

The KPS should work closely with locals, law enforcement officers, local bar and hotel owners and port security guards to trace the human trafficking and commercial sex chain. This will involve identifying the problematic areas and developing stringent guidelines for monitoring individuals involved in human trafficking and commercial sex activities. The Government of Kiribati needs to invest in physical infrastructure to monitor individuals' movement around port facilities, local bars, hotels, and motels. The security officers need to undergo thorough ethics and professional code of conduct training so that they are prepared to identify and report human trafficking and commercial sex activities. These officers should work with the police to identify victims who may easily fall prey to human traffickers. Mobile-enabled victim identification and reporting system should be set up whereby the security officers can easily report the crime to the police if they identify any unusual activity.

5. Community Engagement

The KPS should fully engage the communities in tracking and identifying the perpetrators involved in human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati (Cordisco Tsai *et al.*, 2021; Lockyer, 2020). There should be community engagement workshops organised by the KPS whereby the police officers discuss the growing severity of crime with community members. By doing this, the police officers are reducing their workload of tracing and monitoring crime and encouraging community members to become responsible citizens.

7.0 Conclusion, Directions for Future Research

To conclude, this chapter argued that one of the major reasons behind the rising problem of human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati is that the KPS and government lack resources and technology to identify, trace and prosecute cases related to this transnational crime.

Shockingly, there are hardly any cases reported and executed on human trafficking, although these activities are visible in the public domain. Kiribati as a nation has very little to offer to its people as it has limited land area and resources. Commercial sex activities have been serving as a major income source to many i-Kiribati families; therefore, these activities are least likely to be reported. NGOs have criticised Kiribati's government and KPS for making limited efforts to trace the human trafficking chain and identify the perpetrators of this crime. The 'Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transactional Organized Crime Act' needs to be urgently revised to account for the prosecution of internal human trafficking cases.

There are several ways how the KPS can work with Kiribati's government to address human trafficking. These include capacity building of the police officers, strengthening laws, awareness campaigns and developing stringent measures for all players across the human trafficking chain. Specifically, investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases and offences should be a priority item for government policymakers. The government policymakers may like to ensure that antitrafficking laws are fully criminalised in Kiribati and are not only limited to cross-border movements. The government policymakers need to develop laws for enforcement officers, social service providers and international vessel movements by conducting interviews with women and children who have been affected by human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. Apparently, this will help the government policymakers to identify the cluster groups who may be vulnerable to human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati. This involves establishing formal procedures for the identification of trafficking victims, and training for frontline officers who may be affected by these activities in Kiribati.

Future researchers can contribute to the study area on human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati by conducting primary surveys with commercial sex workers, crew members from foreign fishing vessels, and social organisations linking commercial sex workers to foreign fishing vessels. Researchers can also conduct primary surveys with police officers policing human trafficking and commercial sex activities in Kiribati to discover the problems and challenges they face in their work.

References

- Ahlburg, D. A., & Jensen, E. R. (1998). The economics of the commercial sex industry. *Confronting AIDS: Evidence from the developing world*, 147-73.
- Bales, K. (2007). What predicts human trafficking?. *International journal of comparative and applied criminal justice*, 31(2), 269-279.
- BBC News. (2021). Kiribati: Tiny island's struggle with overpopulation. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-26017336>
- Benoit, C., & Unsworth, R. (2021). Early assessment of integrated knowledge translation efforts to mobilise sex workers in their communities. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 50(1), 129-140.
- Carrington, K., Hogg, R., Scott, J., & Sozzo, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Palgrave handbook of criminology and the global south*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chen, K. (2014). Book Review: Trafficking and Human Rights: European and Asia-Pacific Perspectives. *South East Asia Research*, 22 (2), 270-272.
- Cordisco Tsai, L., Lim, V., Hentschel, E., & Nhanh, C. (2021). Strengthening services for survivors of human trafficking: Recommendations from survivors in Cambodia. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1-17.
- Donnermeyer, J. (2017). The place of rural in a southern criminology. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 6(1), 118.
- Emmers, R., Greener-Barcham, B., & Thomas, N. (2006). Institutional arrangements to counter human trafficking in the Asia Pacific. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 28(3), 490-511.
- Franko, K. (2019). *Globalisation and Crime*. UK: Sage.
- Government of Kiribati. (2003). *National Development Strategies*. Retrieved from <https://www.sprep.org/att/IRC/eCOPIES/Countries/Kiribati/12.pdf>
- Government of Kiribati. (2019). *Visibility of the Convention and the Committee's General Recommendation. Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women*, Kiribati National Human Rights Taskforce. Kiribati: Tarawa.
- Holmes, G. (2016). Conservation crime as political protest. In J. Donnermeyer (Ed.), *Routledge International Handbook of Rural Criminology* (pp. 309–318). London: Routledge.
- Holmes, L. (Ed.). (2010). *Trafficking and human rights: European and Asia-Pacific perspectives*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- International Centre for Non-Profit Law. (2021). *Act to Amend the Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act*. Retrieved from https://www.icnl.org/research/library/kiribati_amend/
- Kennedy, E., Binder, G., Humphries-Waa, K., Tidhar, T., Cini, K., Comrie-Thomson, L., ... & Azzopardi, P. (2020). Gender inequalities in health and wellbeing across the first two decades of life: an analysis of 40 low-income and middle-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region. *The Lancet Global Health*, 8(12), e1473-e1488.
- Kleemans, E., & Van de Bunt, H. G. (2003). *The social organisation of human trafficking*. In Global organized crime (pp. 97-104). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Lockyer, S. (2020). Beyond inclusion: Survivor-leader voice in anti-human trafficking organisations. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1-22.
- MACBIO. (2021). Kiribati's EEZ. Retrieved from <http://macbio-pacific.info/kiribati/>
- Marks, A., & Hughes, C. (2020). The changing tides of drug consumption, supply and drug policy in Oceania. In *Research Handbook on International Drug Policy*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Moretti, S. (2021). Between refugee protection and migration management: the quest for coordination between UNHCR and IOM in the Asia-Pacific region. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(1), 34-51.
- Morris, R., & Klikauer, T. (2001). Crews of convenience from the South West Pacific: The "German" sailors of Kiribati. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 26(2), 185.
- Naidu, S., & Chand, A. (2018). Exploring the Problems, Issues and Challenges of E-government in Kiribati. *e-Service Journal*, 10(3), 1-23.
- Okech, D., Choi, Y. J., Elkins, J., & Burns, A. C. (2018). Seventeen years of human trafficking research in social work: A review of the literature. *Journal of evidence-informed social work*, 15(2), 103-122.
- OSAC. (2021). Kiribati 2020 Crime & Safety Report. Retrieved from <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/a0739981-fcee-4321-8483-18e7f9c8a7f3>.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1), 1-24.
- Scott, J. G., Fa'avale, A., & Thompson, B. Y. (2018). What can southern criminology contribute to a post-race agenda?. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 13(2), 155-173.
- The Commonwealth. (2021). *Kiribati: History*. Retrieved from <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/kiribati/history>

- The National Academy of Sciences Engineering Medicines. (2013). Risk Factors and Consequences of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and sex trafficking of Minors. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/read/18358/chapter/6>
- Thomas, F.R. (2009). Historical Ecology in Kiribati: Linking Past to Present. *Pacific Science*, 63(4), 567-600.
- UNHCR. (2016). *2016 Trafficking in Persons Report – Kiribati*. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/577f95ed6.html>
- UNICEF. (2008). *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Sexual Abuse in the Pacific*. A Regional Report. UNICEF. Suva. Fiji.
- UNICEF. (2017). *The Problems of Life on Kiribati's Island Paradise*. Retrieved from <https://blogs.unicef.org/east-asia-pacific/problems-life-kiribatis-island-paradise/>
- US Department of State, (2015). Office To Monitor And Combat Trafficking In Persons. Retrieved from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2015/243467.htm>
- United Nations office on drugs and crime (2020). Human Trafficking. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html>
- Vyas, R. P., Hayes, M., Savirani, A., & Kanel, P. (2020). Selected regional developments in human rights and democratisation in the Asia Pacific during 2019: Prospects turned into plights.
- WHO. (2020). Sex Workers: Part of the Solution. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/hiv/topics/vct/sw_toolkit/115solution.pdf
- Winterdyk, J. (2020). Explaining Human Trafficking: Modern Day-Slavery. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking*, (pp. 1257-1274). London: Palgrave Macmillian.
- World Bank. (2021). World Bank Database. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/KI>