CONCEPT NOTE

Increasing the Awareness on the Risks and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence for Trafficking in Human Beings through the Development of a Policy Brief

The rapid evolution of innovative technology has greatly influenced the way human trafficking is perpetrated. Criminals are increasingly leveraging technology at every stage of the crime – in the planning, recruitment, transportation, control and exploitation of victims, and in the transferring and hiding of criminal proceeds. This has made the crime even more challenging to tackle, as traffickers are exploiting technologies to remain hidden, to connect with vulnerable individuals, and to expand the number of users of victims' services. Moreover, traffickers are misusing technology to put in place new forms of exploitation, such as the livestreaming of sexual abuse available to a global audience, including of minors, to maximize profits. An analysis of the international jurisprudence on the specific topic revealed existing cases where there had been no in-person contact between any of the parties involved in the exploitation of a person – the victims themselves, the traffickers, nor the individuals indulging in the victim's exploitation – due to the use of technology.

The last couple of years have witnessed the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), which play an increasing role in the day-to-day live. ChatGPT, one of the most popular AI tools, has around 180.5 million users globally. Gemini, a generative artificial intelligence chatbot developed by Google, can now be used by all Google users around the world. Character.ai, which is a neural language model chatbot service that can generate human-like text responses and participate in contextual conversations, has over 20 million users globally. This field is rapidly growing and will be more and more embraced by users worldwide.

Since many of the AI/ML tools can replicate human behaviour, especially the conversational chatbots, an important topic to be explored is the risks of AI/ML for the crime of trafficking in human beings. Important questions arise, such as - how traffickers and criminals can misuse AI/ML to increase criminal proceeds from exploiting trafficked victims and increase their anonymity? What stages of the human trafficking crime – recruitment, control, exploitation – can be better executed by traffickers with the help of AI/ML?

This analysis is a relevant and timely one since there are concrete examples of existing misuse of AI/ML for committing certain crimes. An example is the generation and distribution of Simulated Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material (SCSAEM), which is sexual content depicting fictitious children in formats such as text, drawings, deepfakes[1], or computer-generated graphics. It's also known as fictional CSAEM, pseudo CSAEM, or fantasy images. Recent technological advancements mean fictitious children can now be virtually indistinguishable from real children in child sexual abuse and exploitation material.[2]

There are different theoretical discussions on how AI/ML technology could be misused by traffickers. For example, the Large Language Models are good at impersonating other people. It could become trivial for large-scale criminal platforms to be configured with goals to find potential victims on platforms, engage with them, develop trust (potentially over months), and set up the conversation to

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[1] Deepfakes are the manipulation of facial appearance through deep generative methods, using synthetic media that has been digitally manipulated to replace one person's likeness convincingly with that of another.

[2] https://theconversation.com/virtual-child-sexual-abuse-material-depicts-fictitious-children-but-can-be-used-to-disguise-real-abuse-180248#:~:text=What%27s%20virtual%20child%20sexual%20abuse,pseudo%20pornography%2C%20or%20fantasy%20images.

hand off to a trafficker or extort directly on the platform. Simulated Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material can be used to disguise the abuse of real children, as a gateway to "contact offending" against children (meaning abusing them in real life), and as a grooming technique. Similarly, traffickers could misuse Deepfake technology based on AI and ML for victims' recruitment and control due to its use for whole-face swapping, lip-syncing, part-of-face swapping, or full-body manipulation of voice cloning.

Since technology is often referred to as "a double-edged sword", AI and ML could also be used by anti-trafficking stakeholders to better prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. If criminals could use Large Language Models to recruit victims, law enforcement and civil society could use Large Language Models to identify trafficked victims, conduct anti-trafficking awareness raising campaigns, conduct trainings or demand suppression operations at scale.

Given the limited awareness in the anti-trafficking community and the general public of the risks and opportunities of AI and ML for combating trafficking in human beings, the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime have joined efforts to develop a Policy Brief on this subject.

The objective of the Policy Brief is to inform and guide policymakers and stakeholders in navigating the risks and opportunities presented by AI in the context of human trafficking, with the ultimate goal of strengthening anti-trafficking efforts and protecting vulnerable individuals from exploitation. More specifically, the Policy brief will:

- ✓ Raise awareness among policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and relevant stakeholders about the intersection of AI and human trafficking. This includes highlighting how AI can be both a tool for combating trafficking and a facilitator for traffickers.
- ✓ Outline the various risks associated with the use of AI in human trafficking, such as its potential to automate and scale trafficking operations, facilitate recruitment and exploitation, and evade detection by law enforcement.
- ✓ Identify opportunities where AI can be leveraged to combat human trafficking, such as using predictive analytics to identify patterns of trafficking activity, deploying AI-powered chatbots to provide support to victims, or using machine learning algorithms to analyse vast amounts of data for early detection and intervention.
- ✓ Propose specific policy actions that policymakers and stakeholders can take to mitigate the risks associated with AI in human trafficking while maximizing its potential for combating the crime. This may include legislative measures, investment in technology and training for law enforcement, international collaboration, and partnerships with tech companies.

The Policy Brief will be developed throughout 2024 and launched at a public event in the second semester of 2024. In the development process, the Policy Brief will be peer-reviewed by a number of NGOs and private sector initiatives.