

**Asylos and ARC Foundation publish report on the situation of
returned Vietnamese victims of trafficking from the UK to Vietnam**

The report is the second in a series of strategic research reports that address most critical gaps in country-of-origin information

Asylos and ARC Foundation are pleased to announce the publication of their joint report ***Vietnam: Returned victims of trafficking: Issues affecting the likelihood of re-trafficking***. The report addresses a critical gap in country of origin information (COI) in refugee status determination procedures. It combines relevant and timely publicly available material with new information generated by interviewing a range of individuals with authoritative knowledge on the topic. It can be downloaded [here](#).

The critical need to prioritise COI production on children and young people's risk profiles has become increasingly apparent as lawyers are consistently raising concerns to us about the scarcity of available information in relation to child-specific persecution and harm acting as a barrier to proper consideration of young people's protection claims.

This is especially relevant in the UK as Vietnamese nationals regularly form one of the top ten largest groups of asylum seekers in the UK. They also consistently feature in the top three nationalities of victims referred to the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM), with numbers consistently increasing over the past few years. Existing COI focuses mainly on the migration route and experience en route or in the country of final destination rather than on the situation upon return for victims of trafficking, whilst UK guidance in the form of legal Country Guidance determinations on this issue is non-existent.

The report covers seven **research areas** relating to the return of victims of trafficking to Vietnam:

- Profiles of victims of trafficking and traffickers
- Legal framework
- State protection availability
- Shelters
- Rehabilitation and Reintegration programmes
- Internal relocation and the 'Ho Khau' household registration system
- Issues affecting the likelihood of re-trafficking

Based on the desk-based research and the interviews, the following **key observations** can be made:

- Vietnamese adults, young persons as well as children are recruited by organised crime networks in the pretences of job opportunities in the UK to subject them to forced labour in cannabis farms and nail bars.
- Often victims of traffickers know their traffickers from personal networks, including friends and family, who themselves were trafficked in the past.
- There is a gap in existing legal protection for children as in Vietnam, 'child trafficking' applies to under 16 year-olds only, and does not include those trafficked at the ages of 16 or 17 years.
- The national legal definition of what constitutes a victim of trafficking differs from the internationally accepted definition resulting in returned victims of trafficking not being recognised as such and therefore not being able to access state shelter and service provisions. Instead, they are frequently classified as 'economic migrants' especially if they left Vietnam of their own free will.
- Victims of trafficking recognised by the UK NRM are not automatically accepted by the Vietnamese authorities.
- Concerns remain regarding the Vietnamese state's ability to provide protection with the U.S. Department of State's 2019 Trafficking in Persons report downgrading Vietnam to the Tier 2 Watch List finding that the Vietnamese government "decreased efforts to protect victims".
- There are no specific government run shelters for victims of trafficking, but rather victims of trafficking stay in the same shelters that support other vulnerable people called Social Protection Centres. There is only one government run shelter that is specifically dedicated to female trafficking victims where children can also stay. There are no state shelters specifically for male or children victims of trafficking.
- The Social Protection Centres have capacity issues and its staff and services are not necessarily geared towards the needs of victims of trafficking.
- Factors that may increase the possibility of re-trafficking include economic, social and psychological problems on return, as well as not accessing support on return. Many returnees have a high level of debt to pay back to traffickers or moneylenders which leave them vulnerable to re-trafficking.
- Identified barriers to re-integration include the stigma and discrimination related to trafficking. For women this is particularly in the case of sex-trafficking and for men there is the stigma of being a 'failed migrant'. This is also cited as a factor that may increase the possibility of re-trafficking.

Feedback

In order to improve and to measure the impact of our publications we would be extremely grateful for any comments and feedback as to how the reports have been used in refugee status determination processes, or beyond, by completing our feedback form [here](#).

More about Asylos and ARC Foundation's 'strategic research project'

On the back of our [2017 report on 'westernised' young men being returned to Kabul](#), Asylos and ARC Foundation have received a three-year grant to publish a series of strategic research reports with the aim of addressing the most critical gaps in country of origin information (COI) in UK refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. The first report was published in May 2019 [Albania: trafficked boys and young men](#). The topic for each report will be chosen from the suggestions we receive from practitioners supporting asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in the UK, with periodical call outs being announced through legal networks and on our website. Please get in touch with us at info@asylos.eu and info@asylumresearchcentre.org to learn more about the project and topic scoping.