

Introduction

The information has been prepared on the basis of relevant analysis of Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prosecutor General's Office, the 26th Center, the 76th local executive body, Ombudsman Apparatus, relevant international institutions.

Human trafficking, which violates fundamental human rights and freedoms and jeopardizes international security, remains one of the most dangerous kinds of transnational organized crime in its different manifestations and forms. Existing unbreakable coherence of human trafficking and force labor crimes with illegal migration makes implementation of counter-measures in this field necessary within not only in one country, but also at a regional and global level.

It seems from reports of international organizations that about 25 million victims of human trafficking were detected in 2021 and 5 of each 10 victims were adult women, while one in third were children in the global scope. On the other side, millions of people lost their jobs globally due to COVID-19 pandemic (114 million in only 2020) and it increased human trafficking risks especially.

Restrictions applied regarding pandemic sometimes caused breaks in organization of awareness measures, training, investigation

and following relevant crimes, completion of investigation materials or trial review in out country like other states.

However, prevention of these crimes, defense of victims, cooperation among civil society, international and foreign institutions have been continued in accordance with requirements of pandemic within the framework of Azerbaijan's fighting strategy against human trafficking.

Legislation

Although Azerbaijan has concrete legal norms, regulating activity of fight against human trafficking, relevant legislation base has been improved by taking into consideration requirements of modern period, recommendations of international bodies, and advanced experience. Thus, as a result of amendments suggested to six decisions of Cabinet of Ministers:

- local structure of State Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and DOST Centers have been determined responsible for measures such as professional preparation, repatriation, and

recruitment during individual social rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking;

- Indicators, characterizing features of victims, subjected to exploitation of labor, have been improved, relevant indicators have been specified;

- State Migration Committee and medical institutions have been handed over a duty of immediate delivery of information, obtained on a person's being a victim or a probable victim to special police department;

- New norm has been added to determine application of preventive measures by Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Migration Service on assessment and prevention of risk of person's, who has been repatriated, being a victim again in the future.

Normative legal act projects have been developed on conduction of monitoring by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population in the field of construction, agriculture, and service within the framework of implementation of National Action Plan for detention and prevention of human trafficking and forced labor crimes, as well as by taking into

consideration international organization (expert group of US State Department and Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) and has been presented to the Cabinet of Ministers.

Legislation projects have been developed further productive conduction of National Directory on Victims of Human Trafficking, reformation of composition of relevant interdepartmental commission and Working Group under National Coordinator on fight against human trafficking by reviewing legal status by involving non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

Petition has been raised on join of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe Convention on against Trafficking in Human Organs and handed over relevantly.

Prevention and awareness, exercise and trainings

Necessary measures such as awareness work, which has special importance in prevention of human trafficking, control on illegal migration, transit use of country territory for human trafficking purposes, prevention of child marriages, families of neglected, out-of-school, adopted, foster children or children under guardianship,

monitoring on mass media, internet information resources, etc. have been continued.

14,000 awareness booklets and flyers have been sent to relevant public bodies for informing persons, who go to foreign states to deal with labor activity, who use the country territory as transit, and foreigners, who arrived in the country, on the danger of human trafficking, spread of the mentioned tools have been provided in transport, moving en international routes, border checkpoints.

Within the framework of about 700 awareness events in education institutions regarding anti-narcotic promotion, Ministry of Internal Affairs has provided comprehensive information on danger caused by human trafficking, law violations against children by using information technologies, ways of protection from such kinds of actions, prevention of circulation of hazardous information.

It should be noted in this regard that “Parent control and internet security” (kidsafe.az), which excludes children’s access to grabbing, narcotic drugs, human trafficking, terrorism, hazardous advertisements in internet information resources and provides informing parents immediately on such attempts, has been launched at

the initiative of State Committee of Family, Women, and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

A videoconference has been held dedicated to the “Day of fight against trafficking of human beings” with participation of employees of Representation of International Migration Organization in Azerbaijan, Ministries of Internal Affairs and Labor and Social Protection of Population and ASAN Volunteers.

Broad information was provided on features and forms of human trafficking, forms of rehabilitation with victims, methods of combating human trafficking by organizing awareness events by the Center for Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking directly under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population, the Ministries of Culture and Education in 6 universities and 26 cities and regions of the country, as well as relevant information was disseminated on social media.

State Committee on Family, Women and Children within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations Development Program, held meetings in 12 cities and regions of the country on issues such as gender and violence against child, prevention of early

marriages, identification of at-risk families and providing them with necessary support.

Representatives of about 50 Child and Youth Development Centers, principals, methodologists and chairpersons of parent committees of secondary schools in Baku took part in such events organized by the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, the Apparatus of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), and the Psychological Scientific-Research Institute.

Representatives of the Ombudsman's Office provided detailed information on the nature and types of human trafficking, the dangers, exploitation of child labor, its consequences, and the "916 Call Center" that children, who have been exploited or abused, can apply to. This institution has also made a significant contribution to the implementation of the relevant sub-items of the National Action Plan and to responding to inquiries from international organizations on combating human trafficking.

At the same time, in order to prevent early marriages in our country and increase awareness in this area, employees of the Ministry of Justice held 140 awareness-raising events with the population, especially in schools.

In 2021, as a result of joint activities of registration offices and executive offices involved in this work, 972 children born in previous years, but without relevant documents, were identified, 937 were registered, and others were provided with legal assistance in applying to the court to determine the fact of birth.

Individual preventive work with children in socially dangerous situations and their parents was also strengthened, a survey was conducted among 3,000 schoolchildren across the country, and based on the results, and trainings were organized for truant students with the participation of psychologists.

Employees of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population monitored the addresses of 1,209 children adopted, given under the guardianship and trusteeship of citizens and foreigners in 2021, guardianship and trusteeship commissions of local executive authorities monitored the families of 115 children, no violations of their rights were revealed.

One of the issues in focus was to inform the public about the work done.

Thus, information on informative, organizational and legal bases of the fight against these crimes, results, meetings, shelter for victims

of human trafficking, "Hotline", Assistance Fund, etc. has been posted in Azerbaijani and English on the website of the General Directorate for Combating Human Trafficking.

In order for citizens and public organizations to take a more active part in the fight against human trafficking, the website includes "Online application" and "Reception" modules.

The measures taken and the results obtained, using the opportunities of mass media in the prevention of these crimes, have been widely covered on various TV channels, in individual websites and in the press bodies of information agencies.

The effective work of non-governmental organizations should be noted in the promotion work, including the education of potential victims of human trafficking, social rehabilitation, providing them with legal assistance, and organizing the activities of special institutions for victims. 16 of them, who were distinguished for their initiative, were awarded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 13 projects worth more than AZN 100 thousand were funded by the Agency for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Besides, Ministry of Internal Affairs allocated AZN 125 thousand to social rehabilitation, maintenance in shelter and provision with one-time payments of victims of human trafficking, AZN 30,000 for purchase of an area for the shelter acting under the “Azerbaijani Children” Public Union, AZN 20,000 to Organization of Fight against Trafficking of Human beings Public Union for shooting a movie “Ifsha” (“Exposure”).

The retraining courses, which involved about 300 police officers and employees from different service areas, taught the features of the fight against human trafficking and special police officers participated in this work as instructors.

348 employees of the State Migration Service participated in 16 trainings on “Human Trafficking and Forced Labor”, training and retraining courses were organized for 617 employees recruited to the Judicial and Prosecutor bodies, as well as more than 140 judges and lawyers.

International cooperation

Information and exchange of experience on combating human trafficking was also conducted last year with representatives of specialized international organizations and foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, as well as recommendations and inquiries on the fight against human trafficking in the United States Departments of State and Justice and a number of international organizations were provided to be reviewed and answered.

Prospects for cooperation were also discussed at meetings with Representations of the International Organization for Migration and the International Center for Migration Policy Development in Azerbaijan, the United States Agency for International Development, the embassies of this country and the United Kingdom in Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that in the annual reports of the United States Department of State on combating human trafficking, Azerbaijan has been included in the list of second-tier control countries for three consecutive years.

In this regard, meetings with the delegation of the US Embassy in Azerbaijan continue in order to clarify the issues related to

Azerbaijan, to improve the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the reports of international organizations and international rankings.

Measures in field of prevention of forced labor

The tasks set in the National Action Plan in the field of identification of cases creating conditions for forced labor, its victims and potential victims, and prevention of such crimes have been fulfilled.

Thanks to operational-search measures in the reporting year, 3 forced labor facts were detected and criminal cases were launched, and it was determined with the studies in this direction that persons, who suffered from these crimes, were exploited in the agriculture sector within the country.

It should be noted that only 2.7% (51) crimes' from 1,916 human trafficking crimes detected in 2005-2021, being forced labor crimes shows such actions are not characteristic for Azerbaijan.

However, inspections by the Labor Relations Monitoring Center of the State Agency for Services to Citizens and Social Innovations

revealed that 56 people worked at 25 construction sites without employment or service (civil) contracts., materials on one employment organization were sent to the Prosecutor General's Office, an administrative fine in the amount of AZN 166,800 was imposed on 14 more in total.

With measures taken to eliminate informal employment, which plays an important role in the prevention of forced labor crime, conclusion of 793,258 (-133,445) labor contracts between employees and employers was ensured, as well as during the inspections carried out by the State Labor Inspection Service, it was determined that 267 people worked without an employment contract and a fine of AZN 1,339,300 was imposed on the employers who violated the law.

State Migration Service issued work permits to 5,769 people to carry out paid employment in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and extended the work permits of 3,289 people.

Within the framework of program of involvement of potential victims of human trafficking in social-beneficial labor and provision of employment, State Employment Agency achieved provision of 434 persons, including 7 disabled persons, 207 young people, 141 women with work in different sectors, signed 128 treaties with social partners,

sent referrals to 1,072 unemployed and job-seekers. On the other hand, 3,506 new work places were opened in 4 cities and regions of the republic, more than 1,800 persons were involved in paid public works.

In addition, a special register has been prepared and posted on the website of the State Employment Agency to regulate the activities of persons engaged in employment as intermediaries in areas at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

During the reporting year, raids to prevent the exploitation of child labor were continued, revealing 450 children working outside the family environment, pedagogical and social media, working on the streets and begging. As a result, administrative sanctions were taken against 75 parents who did not fulfill their responsibilities related to the education of their children.

350 materials were sent to the commissions, guardianship and trusteeship bodies under the local executive authorities in order to eliminate the relevant problems and provide care and assistance to the children.

Issues related to the future fate of children, including the protection of their rights and legitimate interests, and social

rehabilitation measures in this area are also in focus. Thus, the emerging problems are solved by the commissions for the affairs and protection of the rights of minors, relevant government agencies and specialized non-governmental organizations. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs has developed and will soon approve the Rules "Identification of children in difficult living conditions and the implementation of social protection measures in relation to them."

Criminal prosecution and work with victims

A total of 202 crimes, including 156 human trafficking, 3 forced labor, as well as 43 crimes related to illegal actions with documents for the purpose of human trafficking, were registered as a result of operational-search measures carried out to detect human trafficking crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The analysis shows that human trafficking crimes (202) in our country account for 0.6 percent of the total crimes registered in the country (31,131).

15 persons (14 women, 1 man) were brought to responsibility as accused persons on criminal cases launched regarding the illegal actions (the number's of persons, brought to responsibility, being

less in comparison with the detected facts comes from one human trafficker's exploitation several victims and it is one of characteristic features of these crimes.)

Besides, 80 crimes regarding illegal actions against public morality, as well as 56 involvement in prostitution and 19 maintenance of nests of immorality, 5 illegal spread of pornographic materials or things were detected and relevant persons were brought to responsibility, administrative punitive measures were taken on 619 more persons (women).

12 of 26 wanted accused persons were detained and 11 were found hiding in foreign countries.

12 of 13 people, convicted by courts, were sentenced to between 7 and 10 years in prison, and the sentence of one person was suspended until the child reached the age of 14.

During the reporting year, 95 victims of human trafficking (94 women, 1 man) were identified and all of them were citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

74 of the victims were taken to the Republic of Turkey for sexual exploitation, 12 to the Russian Federation, 7 to the Islamic Republic of

Iran, 1 to the United Arab Emirates, and 1 was subjected to forced labor within the country. 5 of them were 18-25 years old, 59 were 25-35 years old, and 31 were over 35 years old. Seventy-four of the victims were placed in shelters, each provided with medical, psychological, and legal assistance, and directed to non-governmental organizations for social services.

Taking into account the necessary measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims, psychological, legal and medical services were provided to 85 victims at the Center for Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population.

Another 8 people were provided with jobs, 23 were sent to vocational courses, 57 were returned to their families, 7 were assisted in obtaining an identity document, and each received a one-time payment of AZN 700.

The children of the victims were also taken into account, 14 children were involved in the preschool education program, 15 were issued birth certificates, and parents of 9 children were identified and received alimony.

Funds were also allocated from the Fund for Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to cover the costs and social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking and in 2021, a total of 103 victims of human trafficking and possible victims were provided with financial assistance, and one foreign victim was provided to return to his country.

In the reporting year, the software of the “152” hotline was improved and expanded, as well as the function of directing irrelevant appeals to the relevant call services was established.

Last year, 4,506 appeals related to labor activity in foreign countries, education, marriages with foreigners, domestic violence, temporary registration of migrants, adoption and other issues, received by hotline, were investigated and initiators were provided with the necessary explanations.

Tasks ahead

During the last 17 years of the fight against human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan, institutional reforms, necessary organizational and practical measures have been implemented in accordance with world standards, a solid legal framework has been

established, and our country has joined most international documents in the fight against human trafficking.

1,916 relevant crimes have been detected over the period, 607 people have been brought to responsibility, 1,165 victims of these actions have been determined.

Undoubtedly, works which should be done regarding fight against human trafficking are more. Thus, as forms and methods of committing human trafficking actions like other kinds of crimes, detection of them has specific difficulties.

Implementation of unlawful activity through internet over the recent years requires greater efforts.

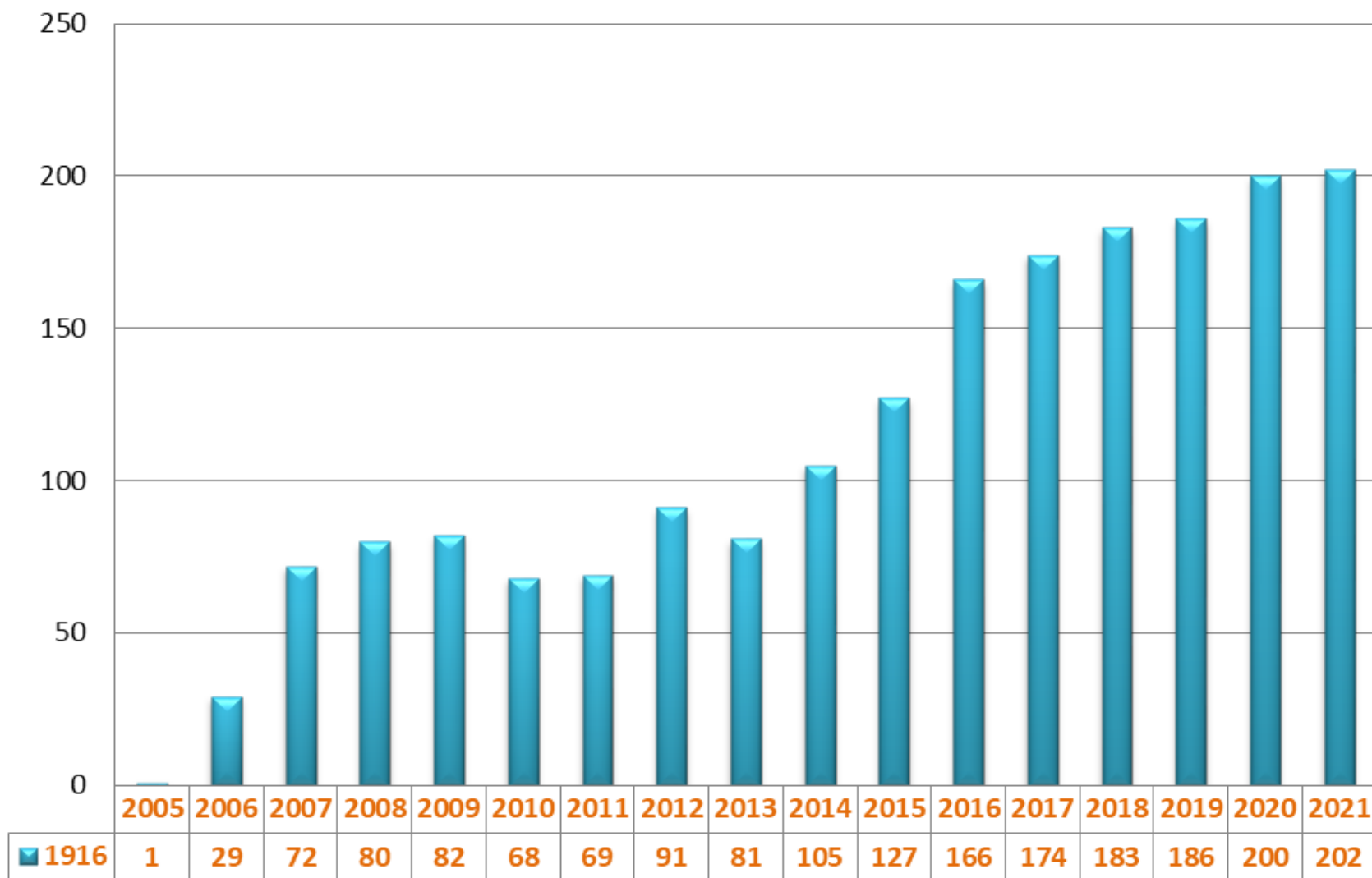
Although human trafficking crimes via websites have not been recorded in Azerbaijan, necessary work is underway on development of new mechanism for prevention and detection of such crimes in accordance with international experience. In parallel, increase of professional preparation of employee for professional following human trafficking crimes, application of modern technologies are paid special attention.

One of the duties ahead is increase of proactive determination efforts of such kinds of crimes and improve of methodical means on training employees, indicators of determination of legislation, human trafficking victims especially child victims, organization of operational-search activity in the field of fight against human trafficking and institute of payment of compensation to victims.

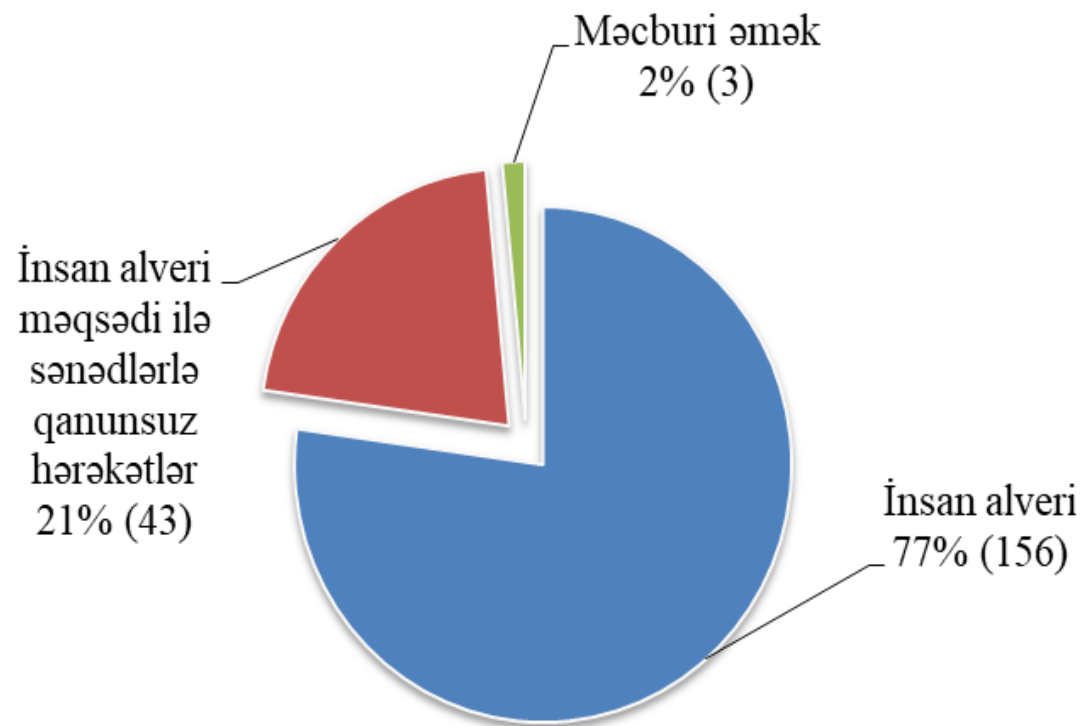
Besides, implementation of measures such as strengthening legal and social defense of women, children, and other people sensitive groups , who can be subjected to human trafficking, facilitation of acceptance procedures to shelters and aid centers for victim, study, detection, elimination risks on human trafficking and forced labor vases in production and service fields at all levels until consumer, strengthening personnel potential of special police body, improve of logistical base, etc.

Activity in this direction is currently continued in accordance with laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decrees and orders of Head of State, international obligations of Azerbaijan.

Dynamics of human trafficking crimes

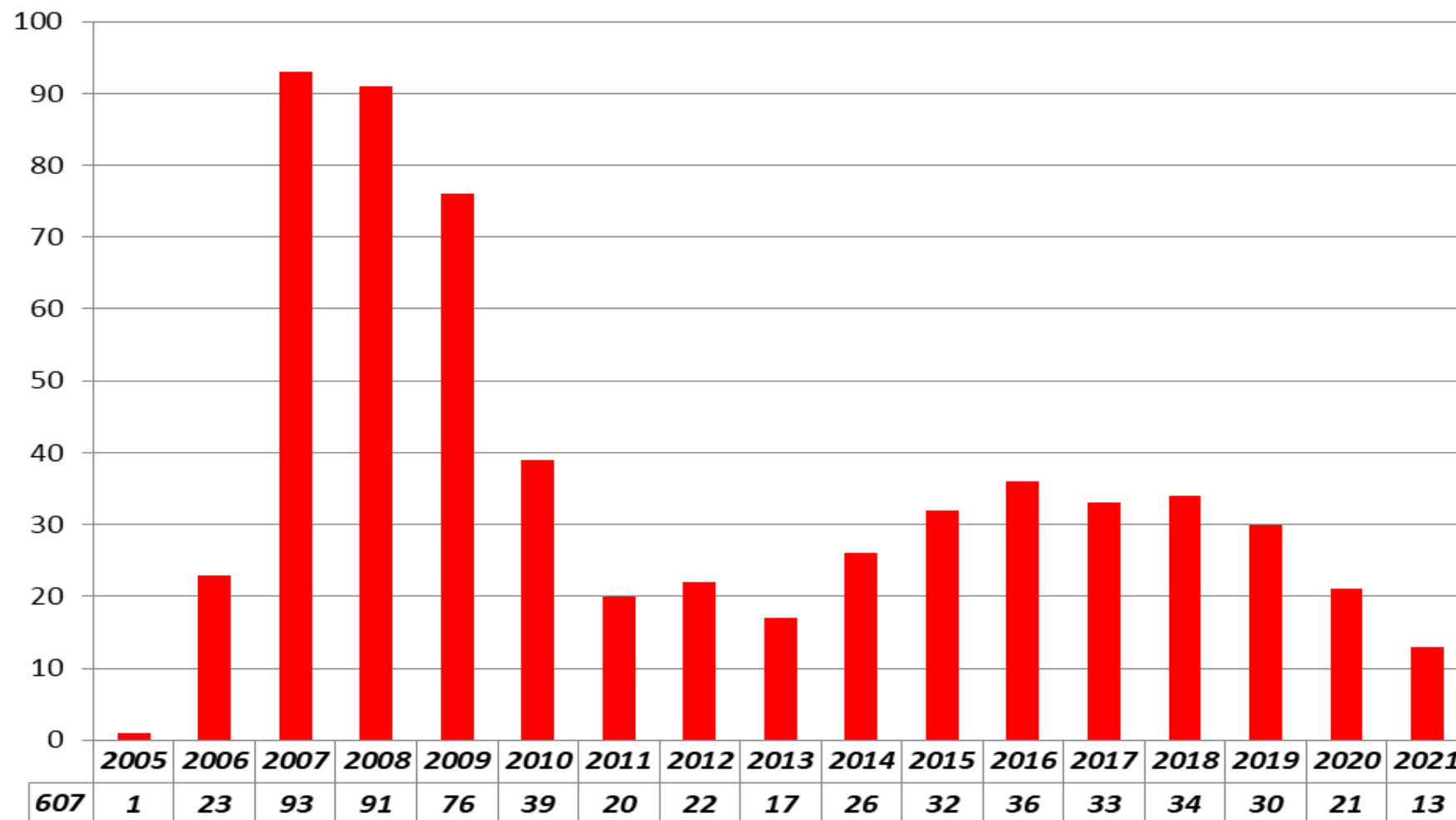


Kinds of human trafficking crimes

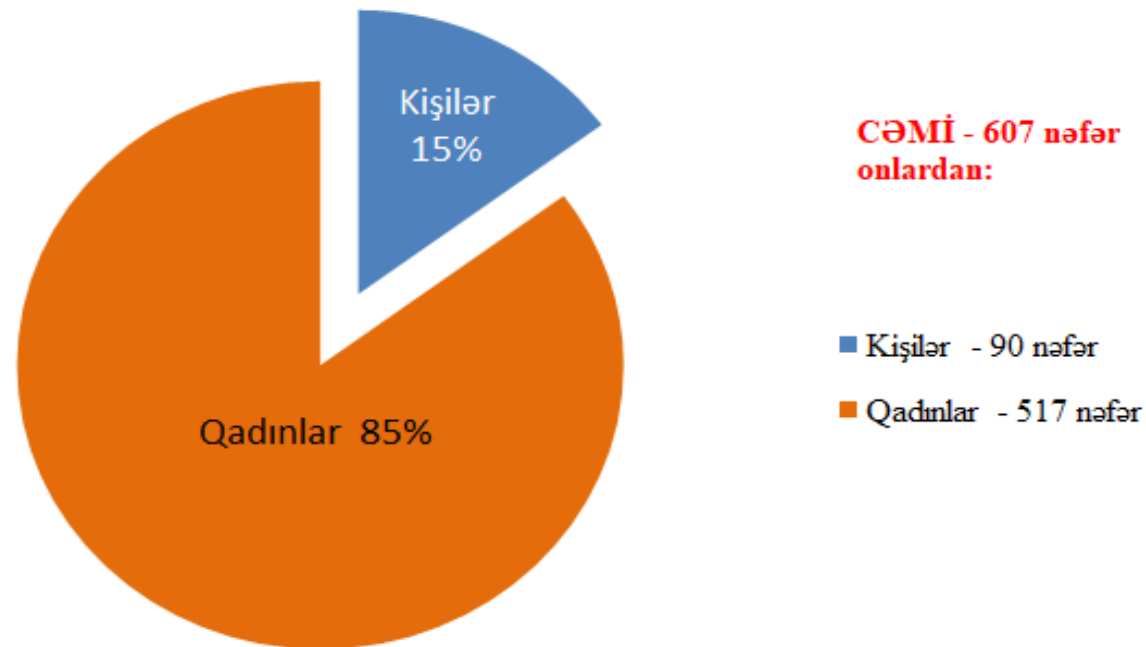


Illegal actions with documents for human trafficking purposes, forced labor, human trafficking

Persons, brought to responsibility for human trafficking crimes in 2005-2021



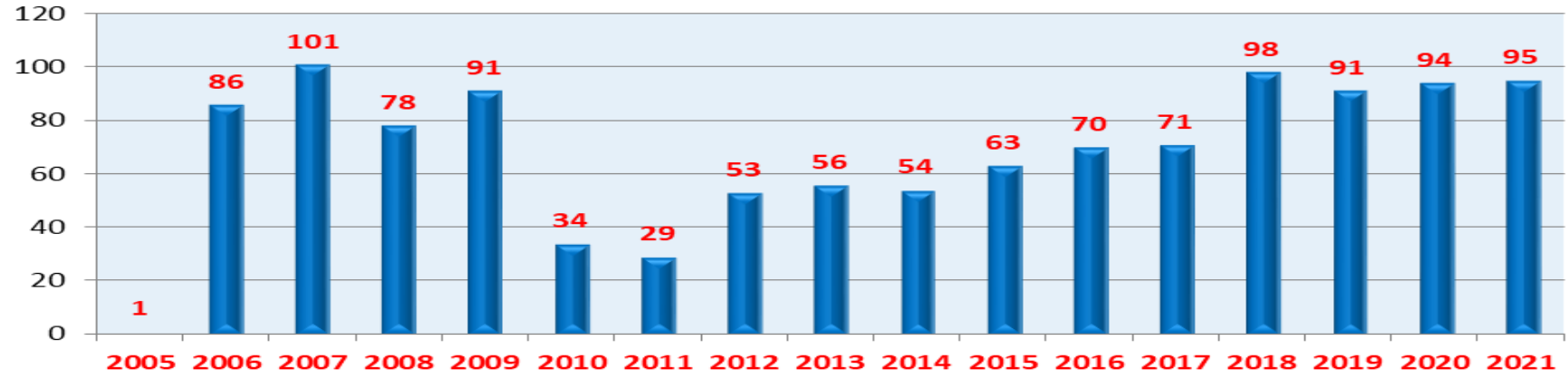
Sexual affiliation of those, who brought to responsibility for human trafficking and forced labor crimes in 2005-2021



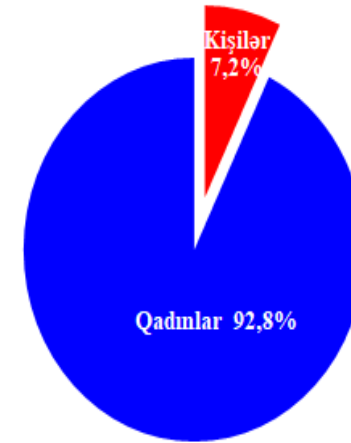
In total – 607 people

From them: men – 90 persons, women - 517 persons

Victims of human trafficking, detected in 2005-2021



- 5-i 18-25 yaş
- 59-u 25-35 yaş
- 31-i 35 yaşdan yuxarı

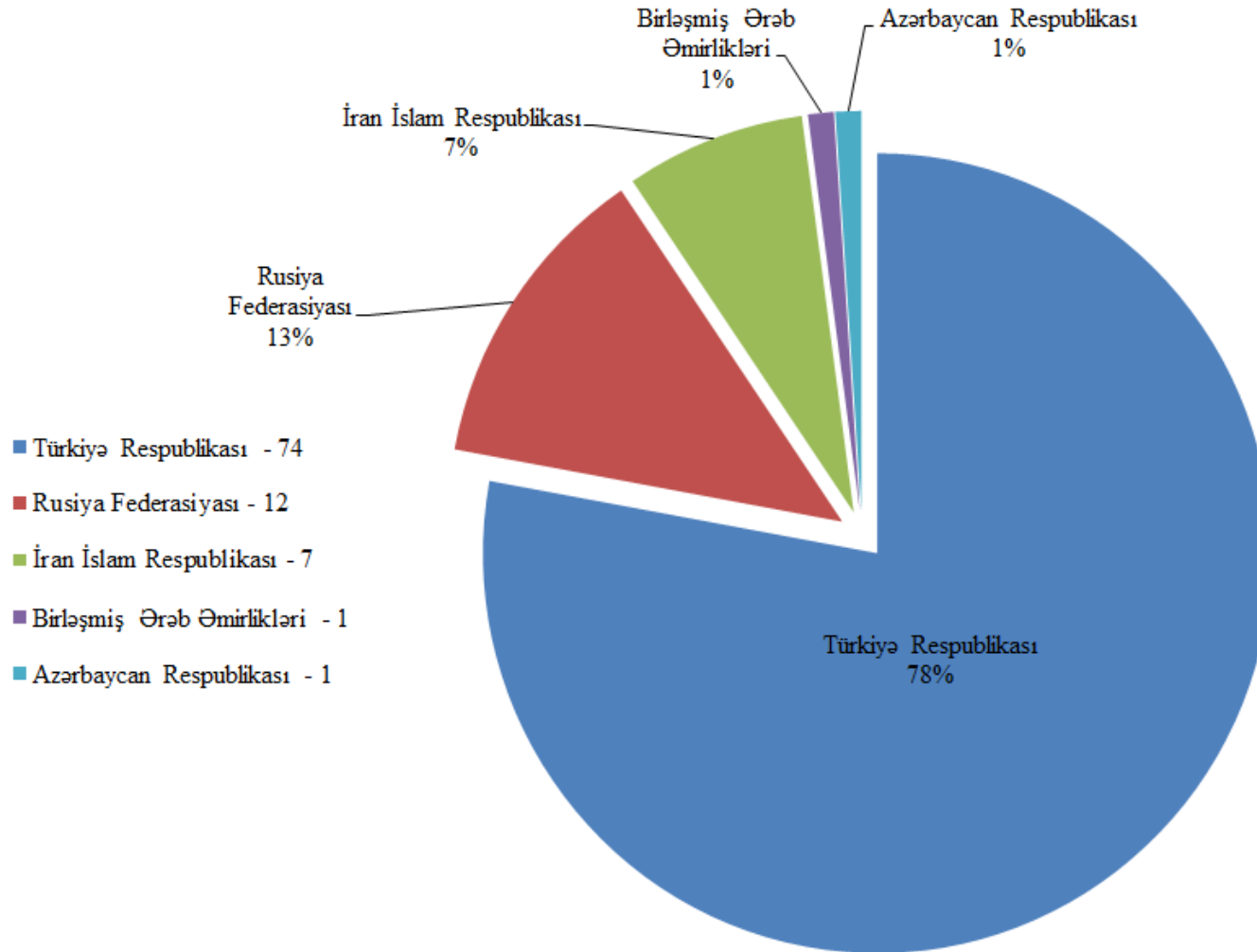


- Kişilər - 84
- Kadınlar - 1081

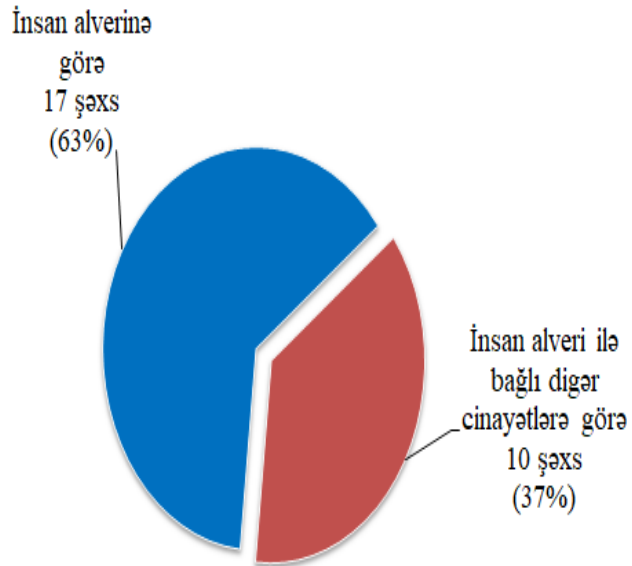
Men-84

5 at 18-25 ages, 59 at 25-35 ages, 31 at over 35 Women 1081

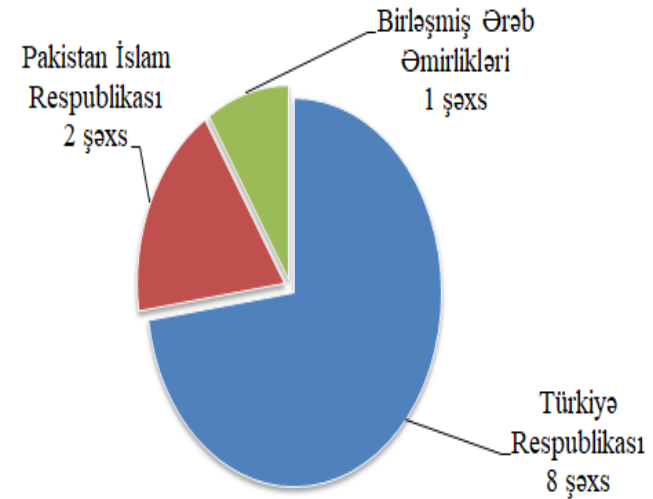
Countries where victims of human trafficking are subjected to exploitation



Accused persons, put on wanted list for human trafficking crimes



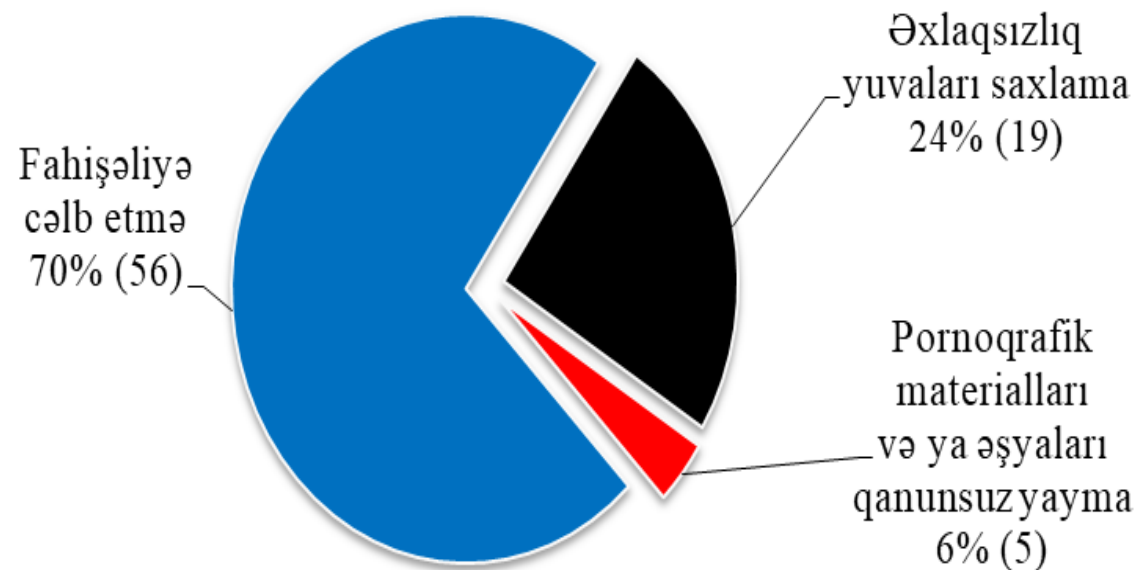
Countries where people wanted by Interpol for human trafficking are believed to be hiding



17 persons for human trafficking, 10 persons for other crimes regarding human trafficking

2 persons in Islamic Republic of Pakistan, one person in United Arab Emirates, eight persons in Republic of Türkiye

Crimes against public morality



Involvement in prostitution

Maintenance of nests of immorality

Illegal spread of pornographic materials or things