

1. Preamble

In 2020, which was remembered for the historic victory of our people in the Patriotic War, combating trafficking in human beings as one of the modern forms of slavery never stopped for a minute, on the contrary, one of the key tasks was to improve the achievements of previous years.

However, as is well known, problems caused by the pandemic last year in the world and its social and economic consequences have multiplied the risk of trafficking in human beings in most countries and at the same time created new opportunities for criminal gangs that resulted in the considerable increase in the number of sexual abuse and trafficking crimes within the country associated with forced labor and domestic violence.

According to the Global UN Report on Trafficking in Human Beings, 50 per cent of victims identified at a global scale have been subjected to sexual abuse, 38 per cent have been subjected to forced labor, 6 per cent have been involved in criminal activities, and the rest have been involved in begging, forced marriage, sale and purchase of human organs and exploited for other purposes. Experts emphasize that there are about 550 trafficking routes in the world and the annual

income derived from these types of offences is about 150 billions of US dollars.

Restrictions imposed in our country due to COVID-19 obviously made it impossible to conduct planned awareness raising campaign on combating trafficking in human beings as well as training for law-enforcement officers and employees of other state authorities on a full-scale basis.

Nevertheless, the focus was on activities in the field of detection and prevention of human trafficking crimes, identification and elimination of circumstances contributing to such crimes, and protection of vulnerable groups against these illegal actions.

One of the most significant events of the last year was the approval of the fourth National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 2 July. This concept paper provides for the implementation of the tasks set for 2020, including the improvement of the regulatory framework, institutional mechanisms, criminal prosecution activities, strengthening the protection of victims, development of cooperation with civil society institutions and international partners, coordination of resources on combating trafficking in human beings and other measures.

2. Methodology

This report has been prepared based on reports of 25 central and 68 local executive authorities, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan and General Prosecutor's Office as well as on the relevant statistics analysis in accordance with Article 7.5 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The purpose of this report is to bring the work done and the implemented strategies in combating trafficking in human beings in the country to the knowledge of the members of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan as well as to determine the duties for the next reporting period based on mutual discussions.

3. Legislative measures

Efforts on improving the regulatory framework in order to meet the global challenges in the combating trafficking in human beings continued in the reporting year as well.

Thus, according to the amendments to the Law on State Duty, victims of trafficking in human beings identified in a foreign country have been exempted from the state duty for the issuance of Certificate of Return to Azerbaijan.

The Regulations on the application of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on registration at the place of residence and at the place of

stay also provides for the procedure of registration of foreign citizens and stateless persons who are trafficking victims or provide assistance to criminal prosecution authorities at the location of the criminal prosecution authority.

Measures aimed at protecting women and children against the threat of trafficking in human beings are stipulated by the National Action Plan for 2020-2023 on Combating Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Children for 2020-2030.

Regulations on the rights of trafficking victims to free psychological aid and specifics of such aid have been added to the current resolutions of the Cabinet of Minister regulating combatinf trafficjng in human beings; psychological rehabilitation and correction have been included with services to be rendered to trafficking victims. The subjects on trafficking in human beings have been included in the programs related to the competence of drivers and coordinating persons who carry out international passenger and cargo transportation by motor vehicles.

The provisions on the support of state social programs regulating labor migration, organization of joint monitoring, ensuring the elimination of child labor, forced labor and trafficking in human

beings are reflected in the General Collective Contract for 2020-2022 signed between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Trade Union Confederation and National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations (employers).

4. Prevention and awareness raising activities, training and education

More than 350 meetings, assemblies and conferences were held in secondary and higher education institutions on the subject of trafficking in human beings by the internal affairs bodies up to March 14, 2020, when measures of social isolation were imposed in our country due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Doctors and psychologists of health care institutions were involved in these events in which 7,000 students and their legal representatives took part.

Afterwards, the awareness raising campaign was organized in online mode.

In particular, a virtual meeting devoted to the Day of combating trafficking in human beings has been held with the participation of the Ministry of Education and the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organization against Trafficking in Human Beings and ASAN volunteers. At the event organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the requirements of the legislation on the

prevention of forced labour, in particular child labour, were explained for participants.

The Ministry of Culture organized more than 20 webinars and meetings on combating trafficking in human beings that were held in 13 cities and regions of the republic.

Twelve thousand booklets and flyers have been distributed among the relevant state authorities within the outreach campaign for creation of awareness on the risk of trafficking in human beings among citizens who were going abroad for work or foreign citizens who used our country's territory for transit.

Booklets in Azerbaijani, English and Russian on risks of trafficking in human beings and contacts to address when faced with this type of danger were distributed among persons travelling on international routes by the State Border Service and State Migration Service at the border control points.

Specialists of the Ministry of Health distributed outreach materials on human trafficking in social networks and provided citizens applying to health institutions with booklets on a range of subjects.

The Council on State Support to NGOs under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan held 31 events; representatives of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs took part in about 15 awareness-raising TV shows on TV and radio channels as well as in mass media.

Relevant information has been posted on the website of the Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to inform the community of the efforts made in combating trafficking in human beings (www.insanalveri.gov.az).

As in previous years, tremendous credit in awareness raising campaign goes to the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations consolidating 45 NGOs, civil society institutions and mass media.

At the same time, 172.5 thousand manats have been allocated by the Council on State Support to NGOs under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to 20 projects presented by NGOs for combating trafficking in human beings.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports held 11 workshops in Baku and the Ministry of Health held 7 workshops on providing assistance to trafficking victims for employees in cities and districts of the republic.

Students were taught the basics of providing distant psychological support and the mechanisms of identification of child victims of trafficking in human beings at training organized by the Ministry of Education with the participation of more than 800 psychologists from secondary schools.

Training for specialists who work in the field of combating trafficking in human beings including the law enforcement officers also were held in accordance with the requirements established by the government in connection with the pandemic.

The refresher courses organized for the senior staff of the internal affairs bodies, operating and investigative authorities took into account the specifics of the fight against trafficking in human beings. Representatives of the special police unit took part in these courses as instructors.

Training was held with regard to the identification and protection of child victims of trafficking with the participation of about 150 officers of the institutions working with minors.

In addition, the problem of trafficking in human beings has been included as a separate subject in the refresher courses organized by

the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Association for judges and lawyers of the courts of first instance and appeal courts.

The training on trafficking in human beings has been continued at the educational institutions of the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Justice, State Border Service and State Customs Committee, as well as in the training center of the State Migration Service.

5. International cooperation

Increased interaction with foreign partners and organizations was a prime focus in the reporting period taking into account the transborder nature of the most of crimes related to trafficking in human beings.

Comprehensive exchange of opinions took place at meetings with representatives of the relevant state agencies of the source and destination countries on the issues of strengthening of information exchange, simplified mechanisms for the return of victims to their countries, extradition of wanted accused persons, and other important issues.

Effective cooperation with foreign colleagues including over 100 agreements signed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the relevant state agencies of about 40 countries yields concrete results in swift identification of the location of Azerbaijani citizens who become

trafficking victims in other states, collection of data on perpetrators and implementation of coordinated measures.

The prospects of cooperation in combating trafficking in human beings were also discussed at meetings with representatives of the International Organization for Migration, the United States Agency for International Development, and the US Embassy in Azerbaijan.

The reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), International Migration and International Labor organizations in the relevant field were analyzed, suggestions and recommendations were taken into account and cooperation with these donor organizations was strengthened.

6. Measures in prevention of forced labor

Tasks related to the strengthening of prevention of forced labour as one of the widespread forms of trafficking in human beings have been fulfilled in a planned manner taking into account the priority of this area.

Within the scope of the employment program, 100,000 persons have been employed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 12,000 families have been enrolled in the self-employment program that minimized considerably the risk of forced labor for citizens.

In particular, the number of labor contracts signed throughout the country increased by 327,000, with 230,000 of them in the private sector, and allowances in the amount of 450 million manats were paid to unemployed and temporarily unemployed persons that has become an important factor in the prevention of forced labor crimes and decline in the rate of unreported employment.

Control activities carried out by the Center for Employment Relations Monitoring of the State Agency for Public Services and Social Innovations have shown a significant positive shift in formal employment in the construction sector. While in previous years about 34 percent of workers involved in construction projects had no formal employment, today their share doesn't exceed 13 percent.

Monitoring has revealed that 67 people were working without labor or service (civil) contract. Materials on the employer organizations were collected and sent to the Prosecutor General's Office, 4 of them were fined in administrative order.

A total of 5 facts of forced labor have been detected in the republic in the result of operational and investigative measures carried out in the reporting year. Nine victims of these crimes were exploited in the agricultural sector within the country, each fact was investigated and accused persons were brought to trial.

One of important measures in the relevant field was the identification of 6377 foreigners who violated the rules of stay and residence in the country and imposition of administrative sanctions against them including deportation of 654 foreigners.

During the raids to prevent child labour exploitation, 370 children deprived of family environment, pedagogical and social influence who were working in the streets and begging have been identified. Inspections revealed that these children were not forced labor victims, but almost all of them were from gypsy families settled in Azerbaijan for many years.

It was identified in the result of the investigation that their parents under various pretexts prefer begging to the work in the public and private sector or in agriculture and get their minor children involved in begging yet they have plots of land and receive the targeted social aids from the government.

Administrative sanctions were imposed on 120 parents who failed to perform their duties of bringing up children including the above mentioned persons.

In addition, 450 materials were submitted to the commissions at the local executive authorities and guardianship and custodianship

agencies in order to tackle this problem and provide children with care and assistance.

Employees of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection conducted monitoring at the places of residence of 120 children who were adopted or taken under guardianship and custody of 120 children in 2020, and provided necessary social aid to each of them. The same monitoring was carried out by guardianship and custody commissions of local executive authorities in families with 277 children.

6. Criminal prosecution and working with trafficking victims

In the result of operational and investigative activities carried out to detect crimes of trafficking in human beings and prosecute accused persons, 155 crimes of trafficking in human beings, as well as 40 crimes related to illegal actions with documents for the purpose of trafficking in human beings were registered. The increase in the number of the above mentioned offenses by 14 facts or 7.5 per cent as compared to 2019, was due to the detection of greater number of latent crime committed in previous years.

All cases of forced labor crimes and 98 per cent of crimes related to trafficking in human beings have been solved, 3 criminal groups of 7 persons have been neutralized. Ten of 23 wanted accused persons have been detained, 13 persons who were fleeing from justice in foreign states have been detected and appropriate measures are currently taken to provide their extradition.

Criminal proceedings were instituted against 20 persons (17 females and 3 males) for crimes related to trafficking in human beings and forced labor. Twelve of 15 persons convicted by the court were sentenced to imprisonment, 2 of them received suspended jail term, and punishment of one person was suspended.

A characteristic feature of this type of crime is that the number of persons brought to trial is lower than the number of detected facts due to the exploitation of several victims by one trafficker.

Among 94 identified trafficking victims (89 females, 3 males, and 2 children) 93 were the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1 person was a foreign citizen (a citizen of the Russian Federation). 81 trafficking victims were subjected to sexual exploitation in Turkey, 4 in the United Arab Emirates, and 9 victims were subjected to forced labor in the country. 80 trafficking victims were given accommodation

in the shelter, provided with medical, psychological and legal assistance and referred to non-governmental organization to be covered by social services.

Appropriate measures also have been taken for the rehabilitation, reintegration and return to a normal lifestyle of 90 victims in the Aid Center for trafficking victims of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population.

As a result, 25 trafficking victims were enrolled in vocational courses, 12 were employed, 58 returned to their families, 9 were provided with personal identity documents, and all of them received a lumpsum allowance in the amount of 700 manats.

Attention was also given to victims' children, 12 children were involved in preschool education program, paternity of 9 children was identified and assistance was given in awarding alimony as well as 14 children were provided with birth certificates.

The hotline service received 5705 calls related to such issues as work and education abroad, marriage with foreigners, domestic violence, temporary registration of migrants, adoption and other issues. All applications have been investigated, appropriate measures

have been taken and necessary explanation has been provided to all callers.

In the result of daily monitoring of the Internet information resources and mass media, about 370 illegal acts related to trafficking in human beings and its various forms and offences against public morals were detected and appropriate measures were taken on each of them. A total of 91 facts related to crimes against public morals were identified; 24 persons were brought to trial and 185 persons were held administratively liable.

Conclusion

Having adopted the fourth National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Azerbaijan reaffirmed its commitment to continue institutional reforms in this area and support the efforts of the world community.

Today, in accordance with the new National Action Plan, systematic work is carried out to ensure prompt detection of facts of trafficking in human beings and forced labor, identification and prosecution of perpetrators, protection of victims and their reintegration into society as well as in other important areas in

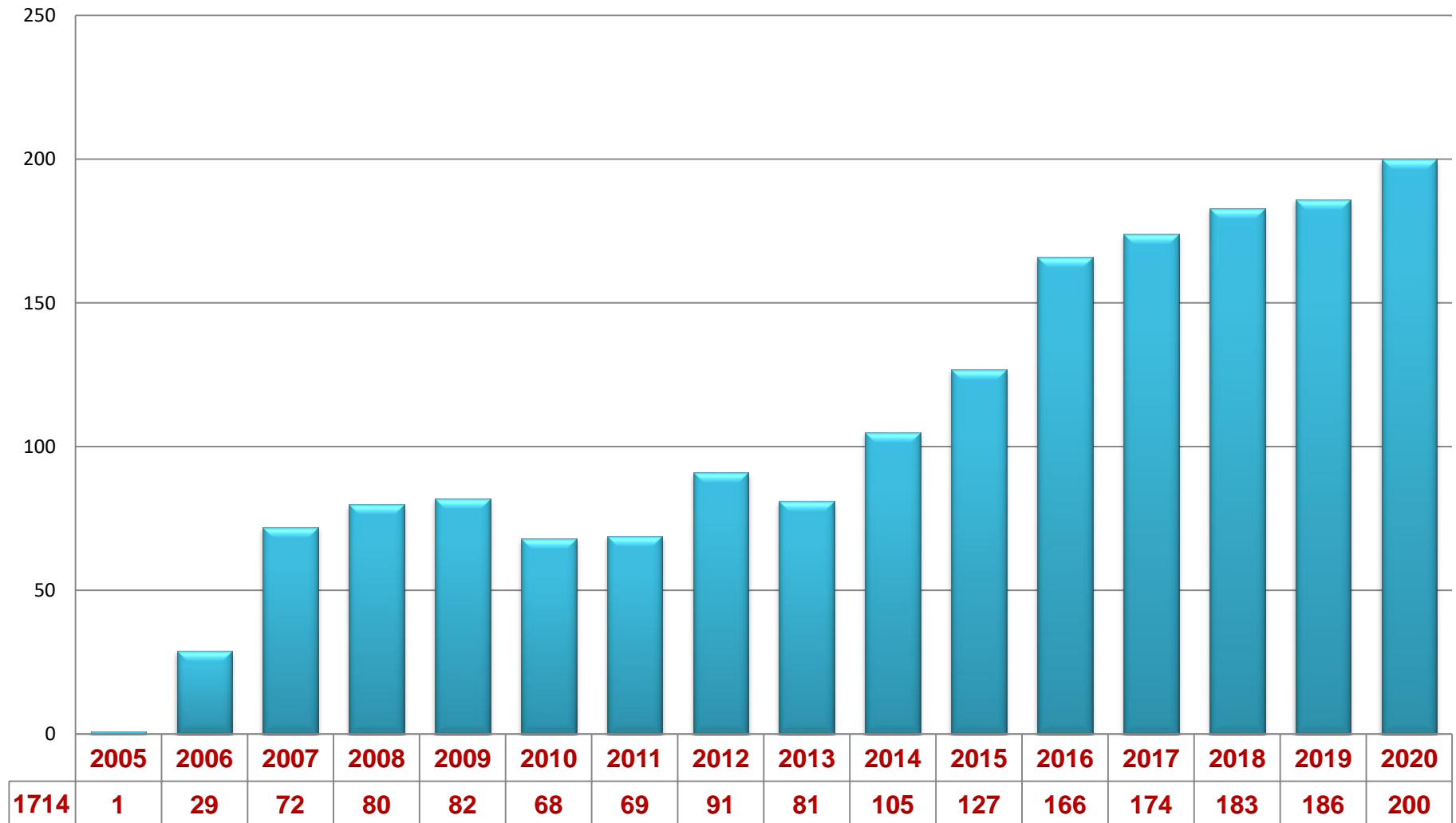
cooperation with relevant state authorities and civil society institutions.

According to the recent UN Report, while there are 13 trafficking victims per 100,000 inhabitants in the world, in our republic this rate is 1 person. This and other achievements are also the result of major efforts made by the state for maintaining the rate of economic development in the country, sustainable improvement of employment and living standards.

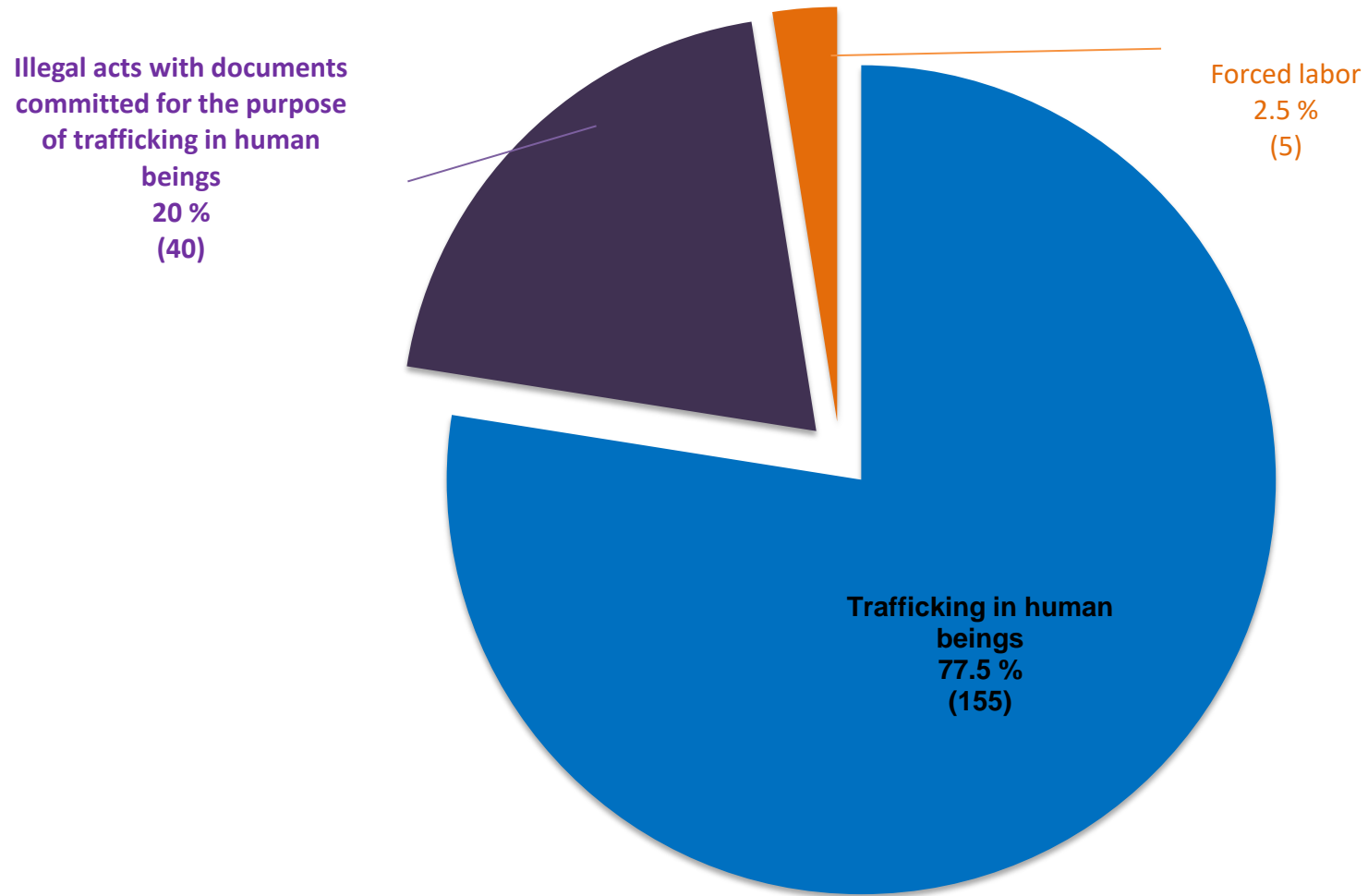
At the same time, there is a lot to be done in combating trafficking in human beings. The goals for the coming years are to further increase the effectiveness of criminal prosecution, operational and search activities, awareness raising activities, protection and social rehabilitation of victims as well as to develop international cooperation.

Relevant activities in this area are consistently carried out in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decrees and orders of the Head of State and international obligations of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

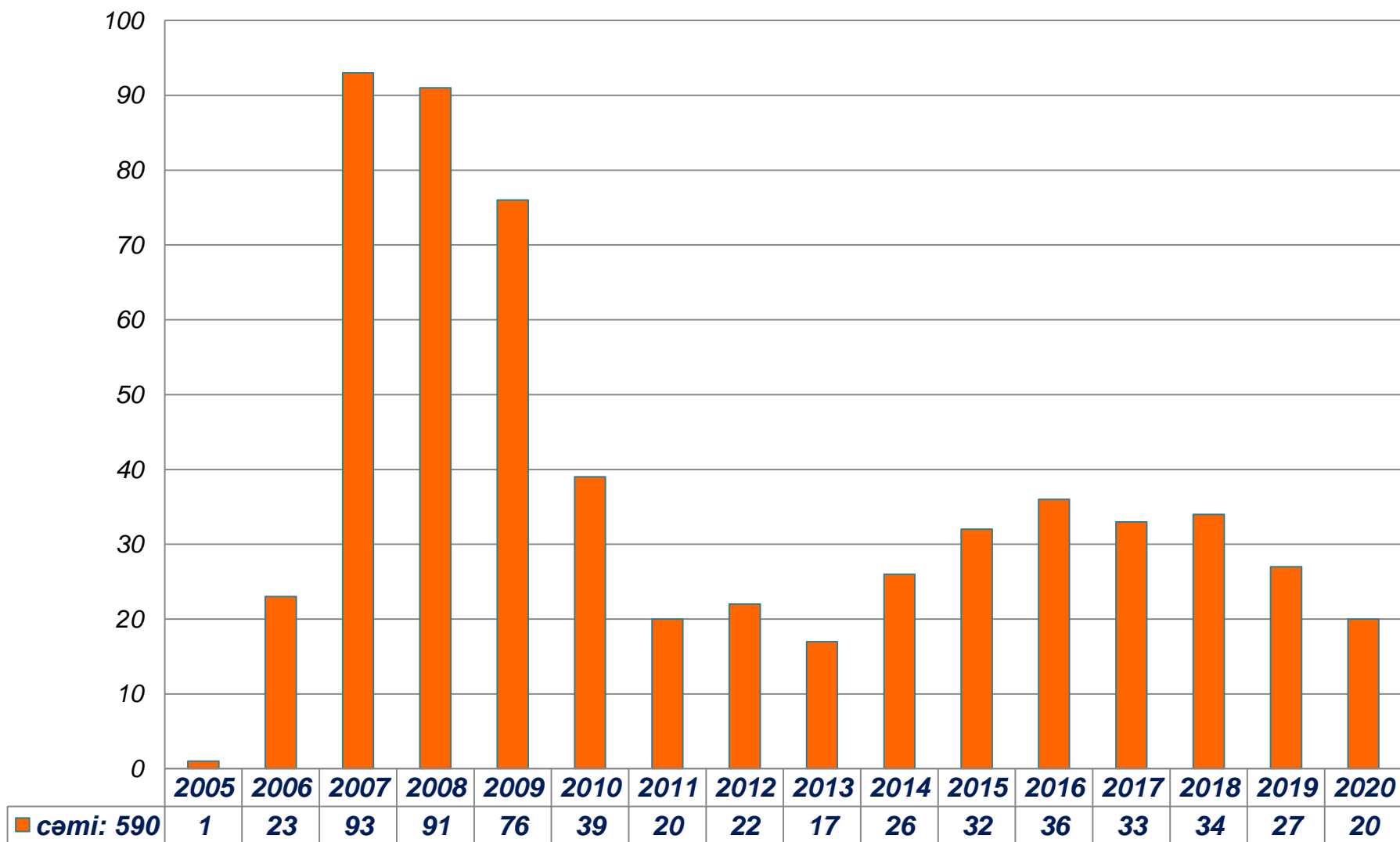
Number of trafficking victims



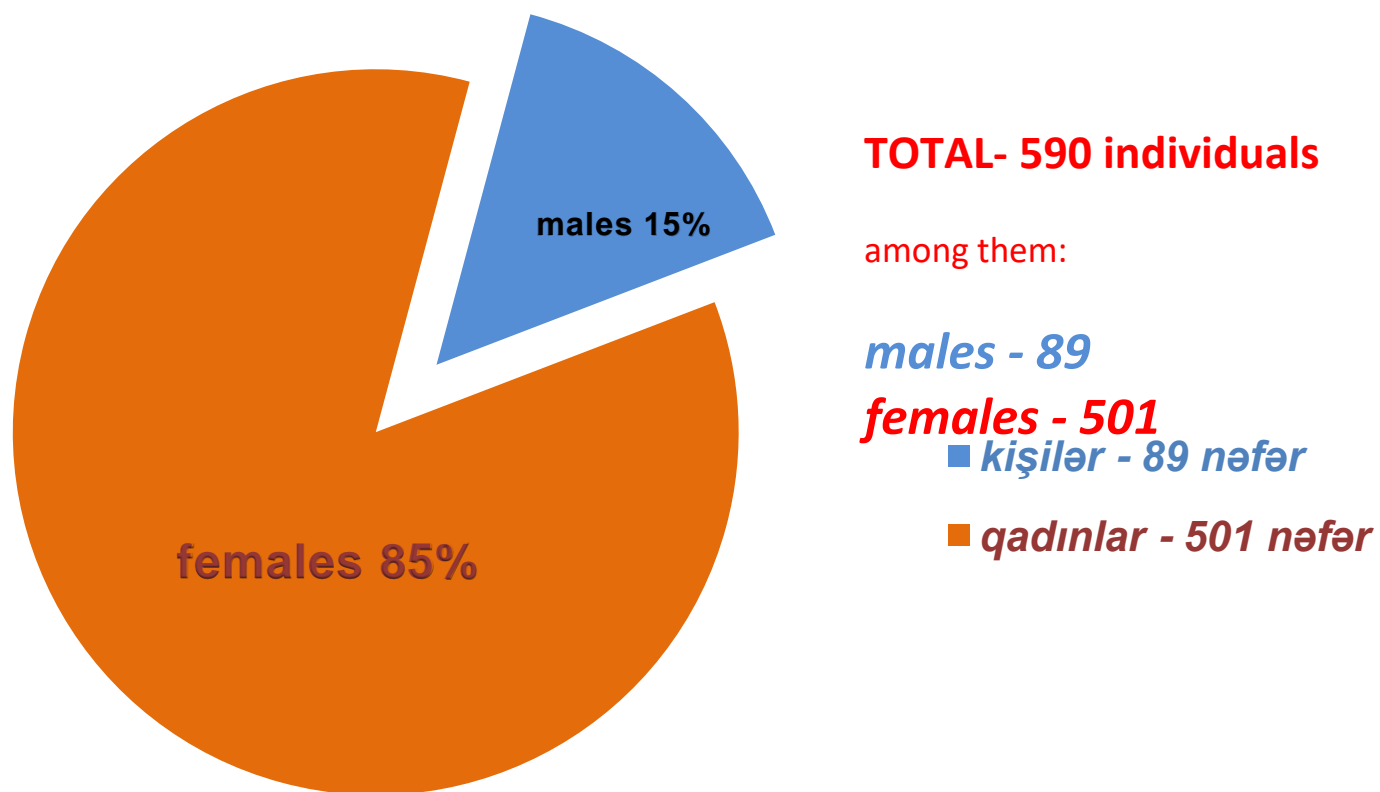
Registered crimes of trafficking in human beings (by types)



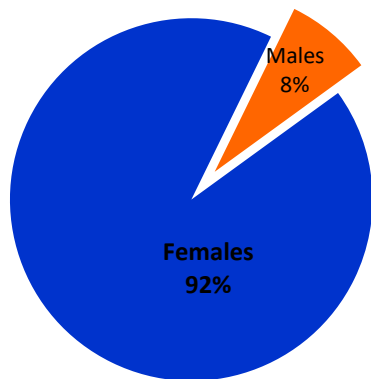
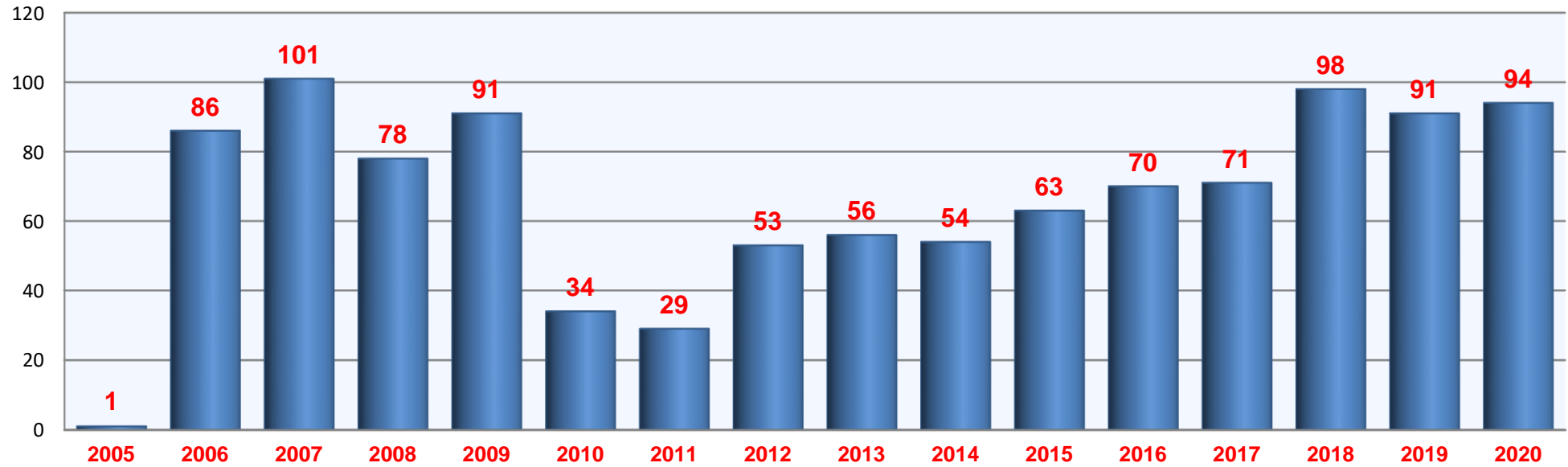
Individuals prosecuted for crimes of trafficking in human beings



**Individuals prosecuted for crimes of trafficking in human beings and forced labor
in 2005-2020**

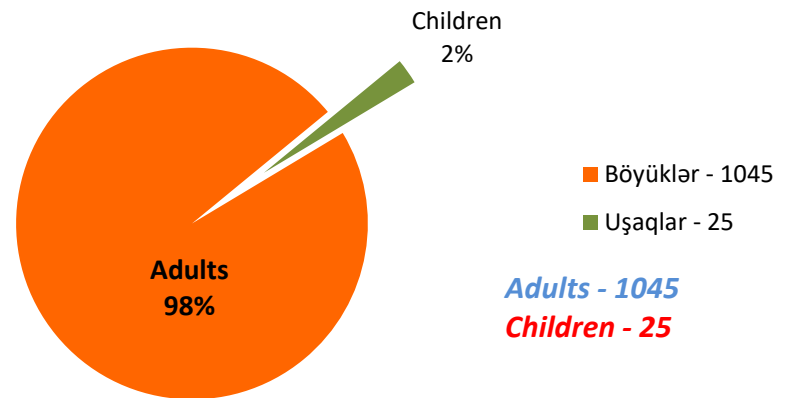


Victims of trafficking in human beings



males - 987
females - 83

■ Kadınlar - 987
■ Kişiler - 83



■ Böyüklər - 1045
■ Uşaqlar - 25

Adults - 1045
Children - 25

Countries where trafficking victims are exploited

