Human Trafficking Interventions (HTI): A Rapid Documentary Analysis of Central Asia Region's (CAR) Efforts

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ABSTRACT: The governments in the Central Asian Region (CAR), until recently, have failed to recognize the prevalence of human trafficking as a social and human rights problem. Even though the problem has persisted for a long time, there is almost non-existent empirical evidence on intervention approaches. Therefore, this study curates and synthesizes evidence on human trafficking interventions in CAR to open up academic conversations in this area. This study adopts the rapid documentary analysis approach as a starting point for further studies, drawing insights from the ecological systems theory to examine human trafficking interventions in CAR. The data is analyzed in line with thematic analysis procedures. Major themes representing overarching mechanisms used in the CAR to intervene in human trafficking situations include 1) awareness creation to expand knowledge on human trafficking 2) provision of shelter and psychosocial support 3) collaborations between different organizations and sectors and 4) tightening legislation. The findings suggest that while this study sets to open conversations about human trafficking interventions in Central Asia as the first study on human trafficking interventions, it is important to use other data curation methods to explore the extent of human trafficking interventions in the region which will fill any information gap this study might have missed.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Trafficking Interventions, Central Asia, CAR, HTI

INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, there has been substantial evidence postulating that trafficking in persons is a top criminal and human rights problem, particularly in transitioning and conflict countries as well as countries plagued with natural disasters (Kaye et al., 2020; Yadav & Sharma, 2022). In the last two decades, the five main Central Asian Region (CAR) countries; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have been facing the problem of human trafficking where women and children are particularly subjected to labor and sexual exploitation either in neighboring countries like Russia, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates or internally (UNODC, 2016; US Department of Justice, 2001). According to Omelicheva and Markowitz (2019) and the US Department of Justice (2001), a factor that makes individuals within the region susceptible to trafficking is the differential performance of the economies and prospects among the five CAR

countries which has led to a migratory flow of poor Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs, and Tajiks into affluent Kazakhstan. Traffickers take advantage of this movement to intercept, lure, force and subjugate vulnerable migrants, largely women and children into inhumane activities like prostitution, as servants and maids, and working in farms and factories (King et al., 2019; Mai et al., 2021), which under international standards, constitute human trafficking (OHCHR, 2000; UNODC, 2021).

Evidence from the scanty research exposed that the majority of human trafficking within the CAR was largely sexual exploitation (US Department of Justice, 2001), however, labor exploitation has become more pervasive now (Kelly, 2013). Some international organizations and researchers have documented that trafficked humans are forced to smuggle drugs, especially in the valley around Ferghana (Burnashev, 2007; US Department of Justice, 2001). In Kazakhstan for example, a United States Department of State report indicated that in 2019, the number of reported trafficking victims were forty, and by 2021, this number had doubled to eighty-eight (cases reported only) (US Department of State, 2021a). Of the 2021 numbers, seventy-one were women and children trafficked domestically and to Bahrain for sexual reasons. Until recently, the governments in CAR failed to recognize the existence of human trafficking as a social and human rights problem (Mbamba, Asare & Gyimah, 2022; US Department of State, 2021a). These several years of pretending the problem of human trafficking did not exist may have also contributed to the limited research on human trafficking in this region. For example, a critical search on Google Scholar with the key words "child trafficking" and "Kazakhstan", "Kyrgyz Republic", "Tajikistan", "Turkmenistan", or "Uzbekistan" did not produce any journal articles on child trafficking in these countries.

In western countries, geographic studies on trafficking interventions are evident and prevalent, whereas in the CAR, there is little engagements. In a context shaped by significant socioeconomic, cultural and environmental differences like CAR, using an "environmental perspective" helps contextualize the complex issue of human trafficking and ongoing interventions. CAR's rapidly changing social and economic system adds a further layer of complexity to the crime of human trafficking, which deserves an "environmental perspective". This study curates evidence from news reporting sites and organizational websites on human trafficking interventions in CAR countries, and using the lens of the ecological systems theory, presents intervention efforts.

Interventions in Human trafficking

Studies on anti-trafficking have stressed on the role of collaborations as a tool to harmonizing resources for a broader impact (Kastro & Dullea, 2020; Miskiah, 2020). To Kastro and Dullea (2020), various stakeholders have different mandates, hence bringing together both state and non-stage organizations is an essential holistic preventive activity which when harnessed, will lead to the prevention of human trafficking. Scholars like Martinho and her colleagues in Portugal contended that through the intentional empowerment of communities on the dynamics of human trafficking, victims can be detected by any member of the community, rescued, and reintegrated (Martinho et al., 2022). More succinctly, Chung (2009) emphasised how stakeholder collaborations contribute to arming communities to prevent human trafficking by stating that, when practitioners involved in combating trafficking collaborate with community leaders, it results in better safeguarding practices that prevent children against exploitation. From another dimension, Samarasinghe and Burton (2007) suggested that to effectively combat human trafficking, global

anti-trafficking measures must be skilfully incorporated in culturally sensitive ways that meet the specific needs and requirements of communities being worked with.

In situations where individuals are already victims, support for survivors during their reintegration into their communities form a key determining factor to prevent re-trafficking (Mbamba, Yeboaa & Ndemole, 2022; Ottisova, et al., 2018). Hence, in Steiner and colleagues' (2018) perspective, community-led reintegration efforts focusing on eliminating microaggressions, and stereotypical attitudes against victims become essential. In Ghana, to compliment and facilitate the smooth re-entry of survivors of trafficking into their communities, after-rescue-care services are available free of charge through state and non-governmental organizations (Mbamba et al., 2022). While meeting this holistic approach to the anti-trafficking mandate can be difficult, some scholars opine that collective communal awareness creation and advocacy of people on the dangers of trafficking will positively contribute to preventing the trafficking of people (Greenbaum et al., 2018; Mbamba et al., 2022). To appropriately espouse the human trafficking intervention situation in Central Asia, the main questions guiding this study are:

1. What is the scope of human trafficking interventions in Central Asia?
2. What forms do human trafficking intervention efforts take in Central Asia?

Theoretical Underpinning: Ecological Systems Theory

Ecosystem theory has received significant research and policy attention in the social sciences and in project practice over the past three decades. This perspective assumes that actions/ have multiple levels of influence and that these influences interact at various levels (Barner et al., 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An ecological perspective therefore emphasizes the need for multi-layered interventions to change human behaviour and collectively intervene in undesirable social situations (Barner et al., 2018). This study adopts the ecological theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner and uses a documentary-analytic approach to understanding interventions in human trafficking situations at micro, meso, exo, and macro levels in social and physical contexts. This theoretical construction allows for a broader conception and understanding of the general environment as a means of intervention. For Bronfenbrenner, there are four primary nested structure arrangements in the environment; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, and at the centre of these levels is the affected individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Drawing from this perspective, this study presents human trafficking as emanating from the society which is affected by and affects the varying levels of the social and physical environments. Therefore, interventions that are embedded within this same structure are likely to produce positive results. At the microsystem, this comprises the individual and their immediate environment and all interactions between them. Previous studies in United States and Chile have highlighted the usefulness of microsystem factors in intervening in human trafficking situations (Barner et al., 2018). A mesosystem involves the interconnections among the major settings in which individuals are found at any point in their life. This level includes interactions among family, peers, church, and workplace. The exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem and involves structures formal or informal like neighbourhoods, mass media, government institutions, and government policies. Factors at this level impact the settings containing the individuals which in turn impact the individuals. The macrosystem borders on the ideologies of a group that shape behaviours and relationships. It encompasses elements of
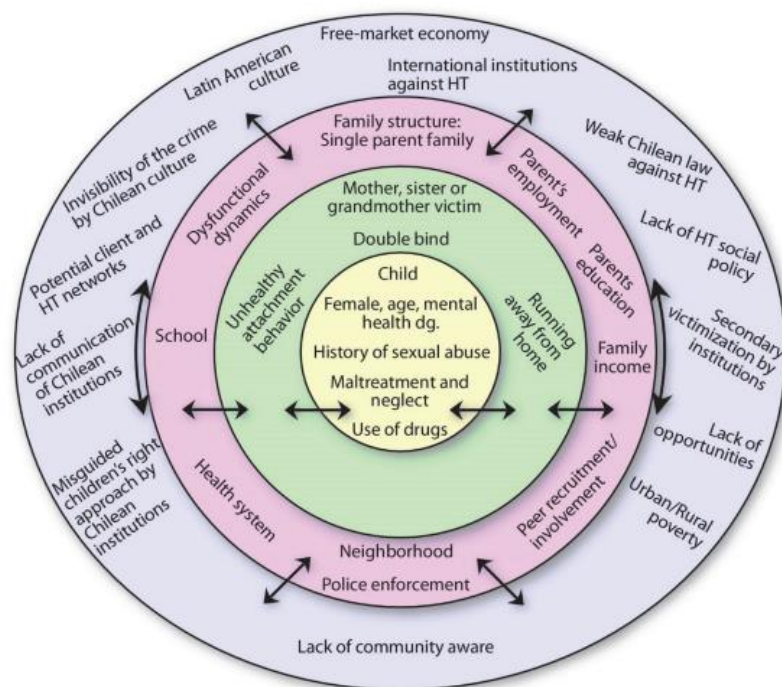
culture, the political, religious, economic, family, social, educational, legal and systems. In *figure 1* below, Escandon Villalobos (2014) succinctly summarizes the various levels and the role each level plays in human trafficking as described above.

*Figure 1: An Ecological Model on Human trafficking (*Escandon Villalobos, 2014*)*

HT = Human trafficking

METHOD
Documentary Review

The use of documentary review approaches to curate data have become widespread (Mogalakwe, 2009), especially with the emergence of crisis like pandemics and natural disasters. Qualitative scholars have also pinned documentary analysis as an important approach to curate data when there are limited peer-reviewed papers on a particular topic (Owusu et al., 2021). According to Owusu et al. (2021), this approach is appropriate for collecting information through reports from credible organizational websites, news reporting outlets, public records and other evidence like flyers, handbooks and training manuals. The author used the documentary review approach to collect data from relevant organizational websites reporting on human trafficking in Central Asia due to the scarcity of peer-reviewed documentation. The use of data reported online in the form of reports and web stories is a widely accepted approach for conducting scientific analysis. During the outbreak of Ebola and other infectious diseases for example, some researchers resorted to this approach (Fielding, Lee & Blank, 2008; Hoogeveen & Pape, 2019; Owusu, et al., 2021; Warren-Gordon, et al., 2010).

Search Procedure and Summary of Results

Published reports and web posts focusing on Human trafficking interventions in CAR were extracted and analysed. Relevant reporting portals based on their credibility raking and reputable international and domestic organizational websites were searched for data reporting on the objective of the study. The search function of news portals and websites was used to locate relevant reports. This was done with key word combinations with the help of the Boolean Operator (BO); AND (see list of keyword combinations in table 2). The search was limited to reports that were published online from January 2010 to August 2022. This wide scope was to ensure that every single document available in the last 2 decades was captured.

After a careful and thorough search in several news portals and websites reporting on human trafficking issues in Central Asia, 18 reports were recovered. After screening in line with inclusion criteria, only seven (8) reports from six (6) portals were included in this study. To be eligible, reports had to 1) contained either personal or reported accounts on human trafficking, or 2) reported on human trafficking interventions. This means, if reports contained information on challenges or risk factors of human trafficking within the region, they were not included in this documentary analysis. 11 news articles were excluded because they did not report on an intervention. Collected narratives were synthesized to understand the predisposing anti-trafficking mechanisms used in the CAR. Table 1 below presents the summary of included reports. It shows that all five (5) main countries within the CAR were included in reports with some evidence.

Table 1: Summary of included reports

Source	Country	Material type
(USAID, 2021)	Kyrgyz Republic Uzbekistan Kazakhstan Tajikistan	Web report
(Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2017)	Kazakstan Uzbekistan Kyrgyr republic Tajikistan Turkmenistan	Web report
(Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2016)	Tajikistan	Web report
(UNODC, 2022a)	Uzbekistan	Report
(UNODC, 2022b)	Kyrgyzstan	Web report

(United Nations, 2022)	Kazakstan Uzbekistan	Web report
(US Department of State, 2021a)	Kazakhstan	Report
(US Department of State, 2021b)	Uzbekistan	Report
(Winrock International, 2022)	All Central Asian Countries	Web report

Table 2: Key word combinations

Key Words - * means the word could be written in different ways
* CAR = Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyr republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan
Human Trafficking AND *CAR   **Trafficking AND *CAR**   **Trafficking Interventions AND *CAR**   **Child trafficking AND *CAR**

Data Analysis

The data that was extracted was imported into Excel spreadsheet for organization. The file was structured into categories including, source, verbatim quotes, and news/report sources. When this was done, data was extracted and shared with a senior colleague to cross-check with the links for validation and corroboration. Afterwards, the data was analysed following the thematic narrative analysis procedure to make meaning of narratives (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). First, marked quotes were put together to represent individual stories. Merged quotes were read and re-read closely to identify similar and contradictory segments. Following this, segments were organized into themes based on commonalities from actual narratives as well as derived meanings from the narratives. Throughout the process, there was consciousness on the possibility of contradictions in curated data that could deepen the findings. These contradictions were carefully considered and used appropriately.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Scope of Human trafficking interventions in CAR

The study included evidence from 2010 to 2021 reporting on human trafficking interventions on CAR countries. Included studies reported on five (5) countries of CAR countries. Evidence on Kazakhstan was present in five (5) reports, Tajikistan in three (3), Kyrgyr Republic in two (2), Uzbekistan in four (4) and Turkmenistan in one (1) report.

Human trafficking Interventions in CAR

A critical analysis of narratives from news portals and websites shows that there are some intervention efforts within the CAR. Specifically, Major themes representing overarching mechanisms used in the CAR to intervene in human trafficking situations include 1) awareness creation/knowledge 2) shelter and psychosocial support 3) tightening legislation AND 4) inter-organizational/sectorial collaboration. *Table 2* groups these themes based on their ecosystem's levels.

Table 3. Themes divided by ecosystems level

Level	Theme
Microsystem	Psychosocial support
Mesosystem	Awareness creation/knowledge
Macrosystem	Interorganizational/sectoral Collaboration
	Tightening legislation

Shelter and Psychosocial Support

Synthesized evidence shows that because individuals experience unpleasant experiences like abuse and maltreatment from their traffickers, they need to be offered therapeutic services to facilitate their rehabilitation. Recognizing the significance of such social services, international organizations are contributing financially to ensure that every survivor of human trafficking gets access to social services. Kazakhstan has shelters for TIP (Trafficking in Persons) victims and offers support services such as rehabilitation.

For example, the findings highlighted how shelter is provided to those who are rescued to serve as safe places to prepare them for reintegration or permanent stay.

> *Sana Sezim plays a part by offering shelters and support services for TIP victims. El Agartuu started a national database of 40 NGOs helping the counter-trafficking movement and is recognized by the Kyrgyz government to provide referrals for assistance to survivors* (Winrock International, 2022)

> *"Until 2016, international agencies such as USAID and IOM funded such services (USAIDS, 2021).*

Narratives extended this important intervention strategy by emphasizing the role of national governments in contributing to offering social and psychological services for survivors of trafficking from different countries found within Kazakhstan.

> *Now, the Government of Kazakhstan has a dedicated budget for it. We are working with the government to extend these services to individuals from foreign countries who are victims in Kazakhstan (USAIDS, 2021).*

> *The government funded an NGO-operated trafficking hotline that received 1,341 phone calls in 2020, 21 of which were referred to anti-trafficking police units (compared with 1,834 calls culminating in 12 referrals in 2019)* (US Department of State, 2021).

Awareness creation/knowledge on human trafficking

While there is a paucity of empirical evidence on human trafficking within CAR, narratives emerging from this documentary approach to curating evidence reveal that there is the recognition of the prevalence of human trafficking. Therefore, there is the need to engage in activities aimed at creating awareness and improving community knowledge on human trafficking risk factors. Evidence pointed to the fact that to be able to deal with trafficking, it is important to know what human trafficking looks like.

> *The government tries to inform the public about the consequences of human trafficking via setting up information boards, showing films and supporting theatrical plays* (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2016).

Narratives also present the recognition of emerging trends in recruiting and treating victims and suggested that it is important to educate people to become aware of and be able to identify the various ill-treatments which could lead practitioners into identifying traffickers. Reporting on government agencies working for citizens to be able to identify the risk factors of trafficking, a report presented.

> *the government of Kazakhstan approved its Plan to Prevent and Fight Trafficking in Persons for 2015-2017. The authorities are working on recognizing the victims of human trafficking and coming up with the criteria to assess ill-treatments leading to a person's social isolation. This assessment and confirmation of a victim status is supposed to be taking place regardless of whether a criminal case is open or not* (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2017).

One of the avenues identified as significant to reaching a wide scope in terms of equipping people with knowledge on the nexus and dynamics of human trafficking is through the involvement of university students through special human trafficking risk factors trainings. The goal is to equip students with knowledge on what constitutes trafficking to be able to identify trafficking when they see or come across it. In a report, Nurzhan Tulegabylova, the Director of "El Agartuu", advocating for the rights of women and prevention of human trafficking in Kyrgyzstan was quoted as saying:

> *In 2006, through a USAID-program, I was asked to conduct a training for university students on anti-trafficking. I realized how important it was to educate the youth to be vigilant against human trafficking. We have since developed guides and instructional manuals now adopted by the Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Education and Science as learning materials on anti-trafficking," says Nurzhan* (USAID, 2021).

The findings show that informational campaigns largely spearheaded by NGOs have contributed to a reduction in both labour and sex trafficking.

> *Thanks to informational campaigns by NGOs supported by USAID and state partners, we are seeing a decline in the number of forced laborers and victims of sexual exploitation (*(USAID, 2021)

Inter organizational and sectorial Collaborations/Partnerships

Reports indicate that CAR countries place extreme value on inter-organizational collaboration to fight human trafficking.

> *Central Asian governments collaborate with the non-governmental organizations and foreign partners to counter human trafficking. They cooperate with the UN representatives, the OSCE, the IOM and UNODC and take part in trafficking prevention and victim protection programs* (United Nations, 2022).

Such collaborations are necessary because sometimes, different organizations and sectors have different expertise in the intervention process. Hence, there is the need to work closely with others to achieve an eclectic intervention goal. Below are narratives on what has been report from the he different CAR countries in line with collaborations.

> *In Uzbekistan,* the *Republican Interdepartmental Commission* to *Counter Trafficking in Persons coordinates the activities of the state bodies, mahalla (local self-governance entities) and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to fight human trafficking. The government of Uzbekistan gives funds to the Tashkent Rehabilitation Center for men, women and children with an official status of a victim. The Center assisted 503 victims in 2015, compared to 369 people in 2014...The government tries to inform the public about the consequences of human trafficking via setting up information boards, showing films and supporting theatrical plays. Another measure, a rather peculiar one, is to fight human trafficking via demanding all women under 35 years old to get an official permission from their parents or husbands for travelling abroad* (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2017).

> *Over a period of six months in 2022, UNODC implemented numerous activities in close partnership with state and nonstate partners. These activities contributed to the promotion of coherent and efficacious investigations and prosecutions of TIP cases in Uzbekistan. These activities include the establishment of coordination of national efforts supported by international organizations and donors in Uzbekistan* (UNODC, 2022).

> *In 2014, Turkmenistan also set up its working group to combat trafficking. It includes the state representatives and public organizations. The government has also adopted a National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking for 2016-2018, a measure recommended by the international observers in 2015* (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2017).

The result of such collaborations and partnerships is an increase in reaching out to rescue more people who are either victims or potential victims as well as identifying and prosecuting traffickers.

Tightening legislation

One intervention mechanism revealed from the evidence synthesized is that contrary to previous legislation, which was less stringent, countries within the CAR have tightened legislation to cover a wider scope of trafficking offences.

> *The new action plan foresees work on the further improvement of legislation, the establishment of a national referral mechanism, concerted action to prevent trafficking in persons and raise awareness on the risks of*

exploitation, as well as efforts to promote interagency and international cooperation, more effective investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, and victim support (UNODC, 2022b).

Additionally, governments have worked with other international actors to come up with laws that meet international standards against human trafficking. Evidence from Kyrgyzstan to support these states:

> *With the assistance of international partners, the government completed and promulgated a law that included provisions significantly enhancing victim protection procedures and policies. Per Article 27 of the law, victims of human trafficking were exempted from civil, administrative, and criminal liability for acts committed under coercion* (US Department of State, 2021b).

Congruent with some cultural beliefs within the CAR and following evidence that many women and children are at higher risks of being trafficked than their counterpart men, some of the CAR countries have come up with legislation to minimize the number of women being trafficked.

> *Another measure, a rather peculiar one, is to fight human trafficking via demanding all women under 35 years old to get an official permission from their parents or husbands for travelling abroad* (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2017).

In the Central Asian Region, human trafficking is widespread. However, there is scarcity of empirical data on its prevalence and intervention. As of September 1st, 2022, an advanced search for journal articles on google scholar on human trafficking in CAR from 2010 to 2022 yielded zero results. This study therefore becomes important not only as the first to use rigorous analysis to document information from news reports and organizational portals about the dimensions of human trafficking and interventions, but as a reference point to open academic conversations around building a research agenda on human trafficking interventions in Central Asia. The study also stands on the lens of the ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework to understand Human trafficking interventions.

At the microsystem level, the theme of psychosocial services provided to victims of trafficking as a protective intervention effort stands out. In several countries including the United States, Ghana and the UK (Dempsey, 2015; Mbamba et al., 2022), evidence demonstrates the benefits to individuals who are rescued from traffickers and provided with therapeutic treatment in the form of trauma reduction and social image enhancement. Such services are important preparatory actions needed to facilitate the reintegration of victims into their societies again. According to Ottisova and colleagues (2018), several survivors of trafficking have been successfully reintegrated because of effective rehabilitation efforts. These efforts are intertwined with macro level efforts where some CAR countries are investing, through their national budget, in free services to victims. Exceptionally, the findings show that countries have increased the adoption of tele-therapeutic services to victims who, for reasons of distance, are unable to present themselves in person. For example, the findings portray that the government of Kazakhstan has resourced an NGO to operate a call center system where reports and services on trafficking can be handled. Similar to the work of the Human Trafficking Hotline in the USA (Tillyer, Smith & Tillyer, 2021), this tele-system can be enhanced to include anonymous reporting for suspected perpetrators of the crime of human trafficking and victims, especially for those who fear their identity being revealed.

In addition to microsystems level factors, the findings unveil that engaging and training university students to spearhead anti-trafficking efforts has proven to be effective because this populace is highly likely to come across victims of trafficking or sometimes, become victims themselves (Macy & Graham, 2012). This is congruent with Gonçalves, Monteiro and Matos' (2020) findings in their study in Portugal which recommended the active involvement of university students in combating abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

At the mesosystem level, the findings reveal that in the last decade, countries in Central Asia have recognized the prevalence of human trafficking and focused on creating awareness on what constitutes human trafficking. Similar to what Martinho et al. (2022) found in their study on the relevance of "knowing about trafficking" in Portugal, the current study corroborates this by discovering that when individuals within communities have knowledge on various actions that are risk factors of trafficking, they will be equipped to identify traffickers, victims of trafficking and even middlemen involved in the trafficking business. Crime over the years have evolved and perpetrators have now adopted different tactics to committing criminal activities like human trafficking including moving beyond force and coercion, to using more subtle, persuasive, deceptive and savior-centric approaches (Mbamba, et at., 2023; Tillyer, Smith & Tillyer, 2021 Yeboaa, et al., 2022). Therefore, educating people to be abreast with emerging tactics of traffickers is a significant approach used in the study region to begin to combat human trafficking. In line with Greenbaum and colleagues' (2018) revelation, these findings highlight the integral role of NGOs in awareness campaigns, and how successful their activities have been in decreasing sexual exploitation and trafficking within the CAR.

One challenge, however, identified in the current study as hindering NGOs from successfully executing anti-trafficking duties is minimal funding. Therefore, this study suggests that individual governments within the region should set up special funds in their annual budget or find other funding to support organizational (state and non-state) efforts around anti-human trafficking efforts. Additionally, as core to the mesosystem of the ecological systems theory, the media plays a significant role at projecting the dire human trafficking situation in the countries within the region. This will most likely attract the attention of international organizations like International Justice Mission (IJM), International Needs among other anti-human trafficking organization to support.

At the macrosystems level, inter-organizational and sectorial collaborations stand out as a predisposing anti-trafficking initiative. The findings show that in many circumstances, independent work by various actors, including government agencies, NGOs, or other civil society organizations is insufficient to tackle human trafficking cases. Therefore, collaborations among the various actors are important for pulling resources (financial and human) together to get work done in the form of advocacy campaigns, investigations, prosecution and after-care. This corroborates Erikson and Larsson's (2020) findings on collaboration as a powerful tool to combating trafficking. According to International Justice Mission (2016), national anti-trafficking coalitions have often played an essential role in human trafficking interventions. In Ghana, Mbamba et al. (2022) also discovered that one of the best assets in combatting child trafficking is the presence of, and active involvement of coalitions against human trafficking. Similarly, Turkmenistan has set up an anti-trafficking

working group which will oversee national anti-trafficking activities in the country as revealed in the current study.

Consistent with international human trafficking standards, several countries have ratified and established their own legislation in a way that is culturally sensitive (Samarasinghe & Burton, 2007) to responding to human trafficking. According to Farhana (2021), strengthening responses from the legal point will create the right deterrent environment for children to live and grow. The policies that are enacted and implemented have significant impact on the nature of intervention in the crime of human trafficking (Farhana, 2021). In the same vein, this study highlighted that some of the countries within the CAR have adopted tighter legislative reforms aimed at expanding the criminal scope of human trafficking in order to meet international standards and deter traffickers from engaging in the act. Other interventions, tying legality and elements of cultural beliefs in Uzbekistan, demanded all women under the age of 35 to obtain parental approval before travelling abroad. The aim of this framework is to limit transnational trafficking in humans. Such legislation becomes important because among the most vulnerable populations to trafficking in Uzbekistan is women.

CONCLUSION

This documentary analysis has presented findings on human trafficking interventions in Central Asia. Despite the fact that little attention is given to the human trafficking situation in CAR, evidence from reputable organizational sites highlight some interventions in place to combat human trafficking. The findings highlight awareness creation to expand knowledge on human trafficking, provision of psychosocial support, collaborations between different organizations and sectors, and tightening legislation.

While narrative analysis of secondary data has been a widely accepted and used data collection approach, researchers are unable to tell the situations under which data was collected, or the report written. Therefore, we suggest that in-depth information could be gathered from face-to-face interviews with practitioners involved in human trafficking interventions within the CAR. However, the current findings present useful information that sparks academic discussions around human trafficking interventions in CAR and grounds for quantitative studies.

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