

Organ Trafficking and Migrants from Africa

By Dawit W Giorgis

Introduction

Transnational crime is the most lucrative illegal business on earth. Transnational crimes are motivated by the incredibly huge amount of money they can generate which range from US\$1.6 trillion and \$2.2 trillion per year—for the 11 crimes identified by Global Financial Integrity 2017 report. These crimes finance terrorism and corruption across the globe. Transnational crimes destroy local economies, undermine all international and domestic laws, destabilize nations and threaten the safety and security of people.

Despite intense and concerted scrutiny and efforts to compel governments and the private sector to adhere to domestic and international laws and promote more transparency, transnational crimes particularly the 11 mentioned below have thrived to an unprecedented level. They succeed because they collude with government and private sector officials. These are real problems that threaten global security more than any other.

Table X1. The Retail Value of Transnational Crime

Transnational Crime Estimated Annual Value (US\$)

Drug trafficking	\$426 billion to \$652 billion
Small Arms & Light Weapons trafficking	\$1.7 billion to \$3.5 billion
Human trafficking	\$150.2 billion
Organ trafficking	\$840 million to \$1.7 billion
Trafficking in Cultural Property	\$1.2 billion to \$1.6 billion
Counterfeiting	\$923 billion to \$1.13 trillion
Illegal Wildlife Trade	\$5 billion to \$23 billion
IUU Fishing	\$15.5 billion to \$36.4 billion
Illegal logging	\$52 billion to \$157 billion
Illegal mining	\$12 billion to \$48 billion
Crude Oil Theft	\$5.2 billion to \$11.9 billion

Total ***\$1.6 trillion to \$2.2 trillion***

'Global Financial Integrity Report 2017'

This article is about migrants and organ trafficking, listed fourth in the above table, a crime against humanity, against the poor and the helpless, against those who, through no fault of their own, have been pushed out of their country, lost and confused, who needed compassion but face murder and mutilation almost routinely. These are innocent Africans seeking freedom and justice, who have trekked across impregnable harsh deserts and environments for months and reached the coast of the Mediterranean only to be confronted by brutal traffickers who give them the choice of their **'pound of flesh'** or their lives. In many cases they are not even given these choices but simply murdered and their organs taken in a well-organized scheme that includes brokers, traffickers, physicians, hospitals, shippers and end users.

The slaughtering of innocent young aspiring migrant Ethiopian Christians by ISIS was shocking but not shocking enough to force the international community to address the brutalization of African migrants particularly in Egypt, Libya and the coasts of Europe. It is shocking indeed that the free world pays little or no attention to these heinous crimes of human trafficking and worse, killing and mutilation of migrants to get their organs. ***The free world is more concerned about the migration rather than the crimes committed against the migrants.***

Border walls and legal barriers are being constructed across Europe, America and the Middle East to prevent migrants particularly those from Africa and some Middle Eastern countries ravaged by war, poverty and injustice, from ever reaching the coasts of Europe and border posts of America. But there are no boundaries for trafficking their organs. Organs of immigrants murdered or mutilated move freely and swiftly across national boundaries to save the lives of the rich in Europe, US and in the Middle East. "Many do not want them within European borders, but they do seem to want their organs." ¹

Egypt the Major Transit Hub for Organ Traffickers

Around the thousands of migrants waiting to sail to Europe are those who are stalking them to get their organs on behalf of the sick in Europe, America, and Middle East. Some manage to enter Europe in exchange of their organs but for some only their organs are allowed to enter and their bodies decay in the deserts of Africa and in the Mediterranean Sea.

Egypt and Libya are in the spotlight as the primary countries, which are the transit points for migrants traveling to Europe. The organ traffickers "operate openly and freely because they feed on the despair of the most vulnerable," ² with total impunity. Egypt, at a crossroads between the Middle East and North Africa and the

¹ <http://real-agenda.com/organ-trafficking-business>

² <http://real-agenda.com/organ-trafficking-business-european/>

Mediterranean, has become a major transit hub for thousands of migrants and refugees seeking to enter Europe.

Reports indicate that one in 10 migrants and refugees arriving in Italy from the North African coast have been trafficked from Egypt since the start of the year, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said, with the remainder traveling from Libya. The crimes that are being committed against these people in Egypt are heinous. Here are few samples that have been reported:

Several mutilated corpses of migrants, mostly from Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, whose organs were brutally torn out of their living bodies, have been found in the deserts of North Africa.

Nine Somalis, including a mother and her two young children had their organs removed and their bodies dumped in the sea near Alexandria, the Mediterranean port city in Egypt. Horrific pictures showing the Somali victims with autopsy like scars and blood stains emerged and has been circulating in the social media. Reports said they were dumped after being lured onto a migrant boat supposedly heading for Italy, but after were led to undisclosed location in Alexandria and locked up for organ removal.³

Egyptian police have found the bodies of 15 African migrants who appear to have been shot dead in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Officials say most of the victims were Sudanese.⁴

The international community is familiar now with stories coming from Sinai with Bedouin smugglers trafficking migrants and forcing them to give up their organs with promises to take them to Israel. Hamdy Al-Azazy, head of New Generation Foundation, has photos showing corpses with distinctive scars in the abdominal area. All the photos were taken in a morgue in the Egyptian port town of El Arish after the bodies were brought there. Al-Azazy says the organs are taken from refugees while they are still alive. "The organs are not useful if they're dead. They drug them first and remove their organs, then leave them to die and dump them in a deep dry well along with hundreds of bodies."⁵ Graphic video has circulated showing Eritrean and Ethiopians being mutilated to get their organs.⁶

³ <http://www.cabays.com/warar/nine-somalis-dumped-in-egyptian-sea-after-kidnapped-and-organs-removed-by-traffickers-in-egypt/>

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34826469>

⁵ edition.cnn.com/2011/11/03/world/meast/pleitgen-sinai-organ-smugglers/index.html

In 2011, a senior health official in Egypt acknowledged that some 1,500 illegal organ transplants were carried out in the country each year in unlicensed centers⁷. But he said that 80% of these had been closed since the approval of the human organs law the previous year.

However, last year, in Dec 2016, Egyptian authorities arrested 45 people involved in one of the largest organ trafficking networks in the country in a raid. According to the Egyptian Administrative Control Authority, "this is the largest international network of human organ trafficking", involving more than ten hospitals and private clinics.

It included nurses and professors from renowned Egyptian hospitals and universities, as well as buyers and intermediaries, who were detained after it was determined that they belonged to an international organ trafficking network. .

"The accused who were arrested, exploited the economic situation of some Egyptians and the suffering of some patients and their need for treatment to take large financial sums from them, thus breaking the law⁸," the ministry said in a statement.

It added that "millions of dollars and gold bullion" were retrieved.

Excavating the Organ Trade: An Empirical Study of Organ Trading Networks in Cairo, Egypt by Sean Columb, a law lecturer at Liverpool University in Britain, who spent weeks in the Egyptian capital interviewing brokers and donors, mostly from Sudan reveals the criminal underworld of organ trafficking in Cairo which he says has the "largest organ bazaars." The picture of organ trading in Egypt extends beyond the criminal underworld, with mainstream hospitals conducting transplants using kidneys procured through backstreet deals, according to Sean Columb.⁹

"Should a transplant professional (surgeon) suspect that an organ has been donated illegally, there is no legal duty to report this to the relevant authorities," the article said. Surgeons are not accountable to anybody and 'turn a blind eye' to the fact that migrants are being forced to give their organs and being threatened to be killed if they don't. The physicians openly collude with traffickers and simply focus on their share of the money. It is very clear from this report and many other first hand

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgGVlbW3zxY>

⁷ <http://real-agenda.com/organ-trafficking-business-european>

⁸ <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-detains-45-people-involved-organ-trafficking-network-1447623771>

⁹<https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3003061/1/Br%20J%20Criminol-2016-Columb-bjc-azw068.pdf>

reports that traffickers have links internationally with a number of profiteers involved at every stage of the process of trafficking the organ until it reaches the final beneficiary.

The report cites the case of one donor who said security guards imprisoned her in an operating theatre while her kidney was removed. The operation left her with persistent abdominal pain, meaning she has little choice but to work as a prostitute, the report said. If a migrant cannot pay the extortion costs of illegally travelling from Africa to Europe they are often sold to “the organ mafia.”

News Week Jack Moore reports on 7/5/16:

“Men stand wrapped in blankets after a rescue operation of refugees and migrants at sea of the rescue ship 'Aquarius', on May 24, 2016 in front of the Libyan coast. A former trafficker has claimed that smugglers are selling migrants for large sums before they have their organs harvested.”¹⁰ According to this report, Nuredin Wehabrebi Atta, revealed the practice to Italian authorities after his arrest in the country in 2014. Authorities gave him witness protection, which allowed him to come forward with the information. He told investigators that migrants and refugees who can't afford to pay their traffickers are consistently sold for their organs to an Egyptian crime ring for €15,000 to cover their travel costs. He said: “Sometimes the migrant lacks the money to pay for the leg of their journey, or for a place in one of the refuge boats.”¹¹

Atta told investigators “The Egyptians come equipped to remove the organ and transport it in insulated bags.” He added that the smugglers also sold the organs of migrants who died at sea on the journey to Italy. Wehabrebi says some cash-strapped migrants are given an opportunity to sell their organs in exchange for their trafficking transport costs, but the majority are either taken back to Egypt or killed in Italy. The harvested organs are then sold on a lucrative black market to wealthy Europeans and Russians, Wehabrebi told prosecutors in Sicily.¹²

¹⁰ <http://www.newsweek.com/migrants-are-being-sold-their-organs-claims-former-trafficker-477635>

¹¹ <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/750681/Child-migrants-people-smuggling-organs-mafia-gangs-Africa-European-Union-refugee-asylum>

¹² <http://www.thedailybeast.com/italys-gruesome-migrant-organ-tr>

Based on this intelligence dozens of people “making lucrative business out of the plight of migrants attempting to flee their home countries in Africa, were arrested; The Times reported.

An Italian court sentenced Atta to five years in prison in February of 2016 for his role in trafficking. His assistance led to Palermo’s anti-mafia unit opening an investigation into the criminal network.

The head of Spain’s National Transplant Organization (ONT), Rafael Matesanz Matesanz recalls that one of the hospitals with the most activity of living liver transplants is precisely in Cairo.

According to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 20% of refugees crossing Egypt to Israel suffer theft of an organ or are sexually harassed.¹³

Columb’s study has revealed that criminal sanctions and existing laws concerning organ trafficking in Egypt are “inadequate and harmful,” pushing the trade further underground, reducing the bargaining position of organ sellers and exposing them to greater exploitation. The solution needs to address the underlying structural and institutional problems that have enabled the flourishing of this underworld business, the ethical and legal issues that exist within the recipient countries and the factors that create the conditions to push people out of their countries and make them vulnerable to such crimes. Though it happens in Egypt, it is a global phenomenon, which needs commitment and concerted efforts by the international community to enforce the existing laws and address the structural, institutional, and governance problems that the countries of origin of migrants face.

Libya: the Slave Market of the World and Biggest Africa's Haven for Illegal Organ Traffickers

West African migrants are being bought and sold openly in modern-day slave markets in Libya, survivors have told a UN agency helping them return home. Trafficked people passing through Libya have previously reported violence, extortion and slave labor. But the new testimony from the IOM suggests that the trade in human beings has become so normalized that people are being traded in public.

“The latest reports of ‘slave markets’ for migrants can be added to a long list of outrages [in Libya],” said Mohammed Abdiker, IOM’s head of operation and emergencies. “The situation is dire. The more IOM engages inside Libya, the more we learn that it is a vale of tears for all too many migrants. Migrants are being sold in the market as a commodity,” he said, “selling human beings is becoming a trend

¹³ <http://real-agenda.com/organ-trafficking-business-european-transplant-murders>

among smugglers as the smuggling networks in Libya are becoming stronger and stronger.”

“ What we know is that immigrants who fall into the hands of smugglers face systematic malnutrition, sexual abuse and even murder,” Mohammed Abdker, IOMs Director of Operations and Emergencies, said in a statement. “We are hearing about mass graves in the desert.”¹⁴

The North African nation is a major exit point for refugees from Africa trying to reach Europe. But since the overthrow of autocratic leader Muammar Gaddafi, the vast, sparsely populated country has slid into violent chaos and migrants with little cash and usually no papers are particularly vulnerable.¹⁵

CNN reports “many Africans, especially nationals of Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, Sudan and West African natives have embarked 'ignorantly' on a scary journey by road to Libya with an ultimate mission to 'enter-Europe'. But various challenges lies ahead of them as Libya, having become biggest Africa's haven for illegal organ traffickers, many of Libyan nationals chose to engage fully in this illegal business seen as a fast-money spinner at the detriment of the lives of these other African migrants.”¹⁶

A gang of human traffickers accepted migrants' organs as payment for smuggling them to Europe in a perilous journey from northern Africa, an Italian police investigation has revealed. Upon their arrival on European soil, the gang decided whether to "use them as manpower or organ donors,"¹⁷ according to documents ordering pre-trial detention for five gang-members.

ISIS and Organ Trafficking

The ISIS terrorist group is using human organs as a way to finance its operations and save the lives of injured members¹⁸. The Spanish daily El Mundo reported that facing the increased number of wounded members in the Syrian army and popular forces' attacks; the ISIS is selling the body organs of its captives for transplants. According to the report, the ISIS also forces the prisoners in Mosul jails to donate blood and postpones the execution of those sentenced to death to use their blood as much as possible. The ISIS doesn't merely use the organs of its captives and prisoners' bodies

¹⁴ <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/04/libya-slave-markets-nigerians-others-sold-200/>

¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/10/libya-public-slave-auctions-un-migration>

¹⁶ <http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1250714>

¹⁷ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mediterranean-migrants-human-trafficking-gang-took-organs-payment>

¹⁸ <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1869478>

for transplant operations for its members but it sells them to other countries as a lucrative business, it added¹⁹.

In December of 2015 the U.S. government revealed that it had obtained in May, via a Special Forces raid in eastern Syria, a document dated January 31, 2015 (among many others) giving the Islamic justification for harvesting organs from “infidels.” The ruling according to Reuters states that taking organs from a living captive to save a Muslim’s life, even if it is fatal for the captive, is permissible²⁰.

It is believed that ISIS has used the organs of African migrants it has killed in North Africa. Egyptian Jihadists in Sinai have pledged allegiance to ISIS **calling on all Muslims to back Islamic State and renounce ‘infidel democracy.’**

The Demand for Organs

The demand for organs particularly that of kidneys, far outweighs the supply through voluntary donation and as a result it is being met through the illegal operations in the underworld. European Union calculates that the annual worldwide profit made from organ trafficking is between 600 million and 1.2 billion dollars²¹. Organ trafficking and transplant tourism is a global problem, and it takes place in all the five continents.

In the case of North Africa, Middle East and East Africa the end users of trafficked organs, according to Matesanz, who led the Santiago de Compostela convention against organ trafficking, promoted by the Council of Europe, are “the surrounding Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. He also points to Israel, United States and Canada; and of course, EU countries”.

In the US alone:

- Demand for organs outstrips supply by a wide margin. There are about 120,000 on the transplant list in the United States.
- Last year more than 33,600 transplants were conducted, a number that has risen by 20 percent in the past five years.

¹⁹ www.globalresearch.ca/isis-trafficking-body-organs-of-living-people/5511314

²⁰ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anne-speckhard/isis-defector-reports-on-sale-of-organs_b_8897708.html

²¹ <http://real-agenda.com/organ-trafficking-business-european/>

- Every day 20 people die waiting for an organ transplant. An average of 8,000 people die every year waiting for the organs they need.²²

Across the world, kidneys are the most commonly demanded and transplanted organ every year, partly because dialysis can prolong the life of people waiting for this organ. In 2016 in the US a total of 19,057 kidney transplants occurred, followed by 7,841 liver transplants, 3,191 heart transplants and 2,327 lung transplants. Currently, 120,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ in the United States.²³ Together with the demands in Europe, the Arab World, Australia and Asia it is very clear that there is a crisis of shortage of organs for transplant and hence the reason for desperate patients to go underground. In the absence of enforceable laws to guarantee the safety and the rights of the vulnerable from exploitation, the organ mafia sees a lot of potential to make huge profit by setting up illegal markets.

In the US those who are in need of organ transplant must follow the rules of the waiting list and special preferences are made in some cases only for children. This waiting list is managed, monitored and controlled by the United Network for Organ (UNOS). The donor program clearly states, “*Factors such as a patient’s income, celebrity status, and race or ethnic background play no role in determining allocation of organs.*”²⁴ Besides international law which prohibits organ trafficking, the domestic laws of the US are much more stricter, clearer, well resourced and transparent than any other country, though there are few illegal activities that have transpired in the last few years. Despite resolutions to curb transplant tourism, their implementation has been virtually impossible in places like India, Pakistan, China, Philippines, in war torn Middle East, East Africa and North Africa.

The policies that are in place to enhance the voluntary non- commercial organ donor pool are well organized at community and state levels in the US. Such kind of well-resourced programs can certainly encourage people to look for local donors than engage in the illegal procurement of organs, which sometimes entails becoming a transplant tourist.

In 2011, *The New York Times* published an op-ed in favor of legalizing organ selling in the US. But the *Washington Post* came out against the idea in January 2016, noting: “libertarian-minded argue that if our bodies are ours to manage, it should follow that we are also able to sell our organs. They argue that the financial incentive will increase the supply of live donors so significantly, it will eliminate the market shortage.”²⁵

²² <http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/20/medical-experts-use-new-tech-tools-to-combat-organ-transplant-shortage.html>

²³ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/09/health/organ-donation-2016/index.html>

²⁴ <http://www.organtransplants.org/understanding/unos/>

²⁵ <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mirah-riben/howto-best-increase-life>

Currently it is strictly illegal to sell an organ, in accordance with federal law. Any individual convicted of buying or selling human organs faces a five- year imprisonment. If the U.S. legally opens up the market for human organs it will certainly be internationalized and will in most cases favor the wealthy and close out the poor, most probably creating the condition for traffickers to thrive. “Nancy Scheper-Hughes, who co-founded OrgansWatch, says that it is no longer a question of medical ethics; it is international organized crime. Legalizing it might add some protections and regulations, but will do little to minimize the exploitation of the poor.”²⁶

Levy Izhak Rosenbaum’s who ran a black market kidney business paid Israeli donors \$10,000 each for kidneys. However they were each paid “\$10,000”, the going price in Israel for the kidneys of ethnic minorities, Arab-Israelis, and so-called “Russian” immigrants from the former Soviet countries that he sold to Americans for \$120,000, has been released from prison.²⁷

He called himself the 'Robin Hood of kidneys,' but the federal government says he trafficked in human organs and preyed on the desperation of people in need of kidneys to make himself millions. He had arranged more than a hundred transplants in hospitals along the east coast corridor from Boston to Newark to NYC to Philadelphia to Baltimore since 1999. “Organs would be trafficked into the hospital from Israel, where transplant tours usually went the other way – that is, with well-insured Israeli patients traveling into the US, South Africa, Turkey, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Medellin, Columbia and China for kidney and liver transplants, provided by desperate, indebted, disgraced, displaced sellers or 4 executed prisoners (in the case of China).”²⁸

According to a 2014 *New York Times* article, Israelis play a disproportionate role in the international organ trafficking industry. Israel’s low organ donation, which is linked to religious considerations, is given as the reason why many Israelis resist from being organ donors.

The Ministry of Health of Israel states 823,264 Israeli citizens are registered organ donors as of 2015, which is only 14% of the country’s adult population. This compares to around 20%-40% organ donor rates in most European countries, according to European Union statistics and 48% in the US who are actually signed up as donors²⁹ though a great majority of adult Americans support organ donation.

²⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mirah-riben/how-to-best-increase-life_b_9006248.html

²⁷ <https://www.counterpunch.org/2011/11/30/the-rosenbaum-kidney-trafficking-gang/>

²⁸ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2880708/Black-market-kidney-broker-released-prison.html>

²⁹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2880708/Black-market-kidney-broker-released-prison.html>

Preventing the Crime is a Huge Challenge

With 60 million people driven from their homes, trafficking and enslavement are on the rise, the UN warned. Many refugees have lost everything, and have given smugglers life savings and even sacrificed their lives in dangerous voyages in hopes of seeking asylum in a Europe which is largely hostile to their arrival³⁰.

A deal signed in Italy with tribes operating in southern Libya is seen as a great achievement in creating a barrier to stop Africans from entering Europe. "To seal the southern Libyan border means to seal the southern border of Europe," declared minister, Marco Minniti, following the signing ceremony in early April of this year.³¹

The deal, negotiated with leaders of the Toubou and Awlad Sulaiman may make it possible to reduce the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean but hard to believe that it will prevent the migration.

Minniti explained to the Italian newspaper La Stampa that:

"The Libyan border guard service will be active all along the 5,000km [3,106 mile] long south Libyan border. And in the north, migrant sea traffickers will be dealt with by the Libyan coast guard which was trained by Italian experts, and which will be equipped with 10 motorboats from April 30 of this year."³²

At present there are no West Africans in transit from the Canary islands enroute to Europe. Only 144 people made it to Spain by this route between July and September 2016 according to the most recent statistics from the EU's border force, Frontex. More crossed from the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on Morocco's northern coast, but they numbered just under 3,000.³³

The route through the Sinai and Israel also has been closed. The brutal treatment of Eritreans and Sudanese by Bedouin rebels in the Sinai, who extracted ransoms with torture and rape, has shocked many migrants. But it was closed many times before and yet migrants have managed to pass through the closure.

Libya and Egypt have remained possibilities for migrants, but both are now becoming increasingly difficult to cross but migrants and traffickers will always find a way. The latest African Intelligence report from Frontex makes this clear.³⁴

³⁰ http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsId=52709#.WWn6Zf_ytz8

³¹ <http://theconversation.com/europes-wall-against-african-migrants-is-almost-complete-76758>

³² <http://theconversation.com/europes-wall-against-african-migrants-is-almost-complete-76758>

³³ <https://africasustainableconservation.com/category/north-africa/>

³⁴ <http://theconversation.com/europes-wall-against-african-migrants-is-almost-complete-76758>

As the human trafficking and the tragedy continue to make headlines across the globe, the international community has been unable to bring an end to the suffering that millions face as they try to overcome the barriers installed by Europe. UN has decided to convene, a high-level meeting of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, in October 2017, immediately after the general debate, “to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in order to assess achievements, gaps and challenges, including in the implementation of the relevant legal instruments” and approve a Political Declaration on the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The draft of this declaration has already been circulated. It includes:

“Forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs, as set forth in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. (*ref: OP2, A/Res/64/1293 Annex*)..... a comprehensive approach that includes partnerships and measures to prevent it, to prosecute and punish the traffickers and to protect the victims, as well as a criminal justice response commensurate to the serious nature of the offence.”

Most countries have laws prohibiting organ trafficking. There have also been many international legal instruments prohibiting these crimes. There is a general consensus on the part of medical professionals and associates agreeing on the prohibition of organ trade. Most spiritual leaders condemn these criminal activities. There is a universal ethical consensus that human organs should not be for sale like commodities. These violations are further aggravated by the fact that human trafficking almost all the time exploits the poor and the vulnerable. Victims get little or nothing from their organ extraction. Sometime they are murdered and if they survive the brutal surgery by so called medical professionals that are not accountable to anybody, they are left unattended with poor health and usually die not long after the extraction of complications

Organ trafficking is not like drug or arms trafficking because its' links to the larger economy of the country or business is close to nil. Organ trafficking profits a very small group of the underworld and therefore does not have the protection that arms and drug trafficking have. It has little economic significance to a country or to the business world, financially benefiting a small group of organ brokers and physicians.

The physicians performing the transplant can easily be identified since most of the times the surgery can only be done in private or public hospitals or with mobile surgeons and surgery equipment which can be traced. The transportation of organs need maximum cares and can only be done with proper transport and facilities and therefore difficult to avoid detection. The whole affair cannot be totally hidden and is more detectable than many other criminal activities.

The problem is a lack of willingness to enforce the law. While legal prohibitions may exist, governments often make little effort to stop the trade. According to Professor *Asif Efrat* the reasons are “ One is that organ trafficking, at first blush, does not look harmful or morally repugnant. Transactions in organs may deceptively seem

advantageous to both the organ buyer and seller, although in reality they are far from it. While the notion of buying sex — prostitution — meets widespread disapproval, many people accept the buying of kidneys as a legitimate solution for the shortage of organs for transplantation.”³⁵

The efforts of European conservative governments to build legal and physical barriers to stop migrants from ever reaching Europe will stop neither the migration nor the human trafficking. All means have been tried and they have all failed or have been counter productive. Europe underestimates the ingenuity of the traffickers and the determination of migrants who will always find a way no matter how risky it may be. Solutions that exclude the participation of the migrants will not succeed. Migrants or the countries of origin should be included in the discussions and negotiations to find a humane solution that considers the realities that push potential migrants to take such drastic steps.

Trying to stop migrants from attempting to cross over to Europe will be an impossible task. Migrants and many traffickers (not brokers) are the products of conflicts, poverty and lawlessness. All these legal and physical barriers might make it look like migrants will be frustrated but these are people with no options in life and who are prepared to take whatever it takes to reach Europe. Europe, US and Africa should address the underlying push factors in the countries of origin of migrants. That is why despite the above measures being taken by European and North African governments, as I write this article, as many as one million migrants are on their way to the Mediterranean Coast and Europe from countries across Africa.³⁶

Ultimately so long as Europe and America continue to finance the conflict in some regions, support and encourage totalitarian regimes that continue to deny human rights, justice and freedom of speech and acquiesce with the perpetuation of poverty in these countries, they have to expect such desperate measures by people who have nothing to lose by daring the Sahara and the Mediterranean and in the process risk their lives, be victims of organ traffickers who are equally determined to satisfy the insatiable demands of the wealthy.

It was the Irish Famine of 1845-49 (poverty) and the First World War (conflict), that drove many to the new world (USA). “Roughly 60 million Europeans emigrated to the New World between 1820 and 1914.”³⁷

We see a huge change from a hundred years ago. The same causes that drove the Irish, the Germans, and other Europeans to the ‘new world’ are today driving people

³⁵ *Asif Efrat is associate professor of government at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) HeArzliya, Israel.*

³⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/africa>

³⁷ http://www.tcd.ie/Economics/TEP/2003_papers/TEPNo15KOR23.pdf

out of Africa and the Middle East. Poverty and the dream for a better life drove millions of Europeans to Australia and Africa. It was all about better opportunities and people exercising their individual freedoms to realize their ambitions for a better life for themselves and their families. Then, the doors were wide open for them. But this time legal and physical barriers are being constructed to chase away people with identical causes with their predecessors, migrants who who built what we now know as the developed world.

However the numerous previous barriers against free movement of people did not stop people from moving. They just made it more difficult. “Barriers go up, but migration keeps on rising – the number of international migrants has risen by nearly 50% since 1990.”³⁸ And yet heartless and mindless politicians continue to erect more restrictions and more barriers rather than taking pragmatic, humane and realistic and economically beneficent approach that integrates regulated migration to human evolution for a better and harmonious world. We need more people, more governments, more politicians, more NGOs and more humanitarian organizations to be the voices of these people.

“There is something shameful in our acceptance of freedoms for things, when we are not prepared to grant that freedom to our fellow human beings. It’s better, it seems, to be an inanimate object than a living breathing person if you want to travel around the world.”³⁹

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http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/migration/migrationreport2013/Full_Document_final.pdf#zoom=100

39 <https://www.odi.org/comment/9538-migration-capitalism-s-unfinished-business-it-cannot-and-should-not-be-stopped>