**Purpose** To inform the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, to 54th session of the Human Rights Council

Background

The Special Rapporteur will focus his next thematic report to be submitted to the 54th Session of the Human Rights Council on homelessness as a cause and consequence of contemporary forms of slavery. For the purpose of the report, he will examine the experiences of homeless persons themselves and seek information from multiple additional stakeholders and sources.

**Key questions and types of input sought**

1. What are the main causes/drivers of homelessness in your country?

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the poor economic situation is often one of the main factors that contribute to the exploitation, mostly of women and children through various forms of exploitation such as sexual and labor exploitation. Additionally, the traditional customs that are the most prevalent in the Roma tradition and refer to begging, forced marriages and the exposure of children to vagrancy also contribute.

1. Is there evidence of persons experiencing homelessness,**[[1]](https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/call-input-homelessness-cause-and-consequence-contemporary-forms-slavery" \l "_ftn1" \o ")** being exploited in contemporary forms of slavery such as forced of bonded labour, worst forms of child labour, sexual exploitation which may amount to slavery and other forms of exploitation in your country? If so, please provide details in relation to:
   1. Profiles of victims (e.g. age, sex, gender identity/sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, socio-economic status, race and any other features).

- Victims of begging are most often children of Roma nationality, of extremely low socio-economic status, educationally neglected.

- Victims of sexual exploitation are girls aged 13-18, of low socio-economic status, that grew up in dysfunctional families where domestic violence was present, most often by the father against the mother and children.

- The victims of forced marriages are girls aged 13 to 18, majority from Roma families, which are sold in other families for certain sums of money and often forced to beg, sexually exploited and exposed to mental, physical and economic violence.

- Victims of domestic violence are mostly women that, due to their economic dependence on their partners, develop patterns of learned helplessness and choose to stay in a violent community as a form of protection against homelessness. They are often exposed to the prejudices and stigmatization by immediate and extended family members, as well as society.

- Women and children of a migrant population, who reside in camps, are often the victims of sexual and work exploitation by others, mostly man, who also reside in the same camp.

* 1. Profiles of exploiters (e.g. criminal organizations; human traffickers; private businesses/employers, others);

Most often, those are adult men, unemployed, multiple offenders, often addicted to psychoactive substances, reported for domestic violence and other crimes.

* 1. Methods of recruitment of persons experiencing homelessness, including children in street situations;

- Children who are exposed to begging are most often forced by their parents or relatives.

- In the process of sexual exploitation, girls are most often recruited through job offers, most often as waitresses.

- Women's labor rights are often threatened, and they lose their jobs if they become pregnant, on sick leave, etc.

Manifestation of exploitation (e.g. sexual exploitation and/or labour exploitation in various sectors such as agriculture, domestic work and construction, as well as criminal exploitation (e.g. forced begging, drug production/trafficking, theft, etc.)), including their gender dimensions.

1. Is there evidence of homelessness being a consequence of contemporary forms of slavery in your country (i.e. domestic/foreign victims being made homeless after sexual and/or labour exploitation )?  If so, please explain further.

According to the practice of “Medica” Zenica, children, victims of human trafficking, are placed in homes for children without parental care or returned to the primary family if the family members are not traffickers. Adult women act according to their independent choice. There is no adequate long-term exit strategy for victims of human trafficking that would enable some of the rights such as housing, employment, etc.

Due to insufficient support from the institutions, the great promises and the unfulfillment of those promises, children, victims of the trafficking and sexual exploitation thought they had no other choice but to leave a Safe house, live on the streets, and thus expose themselves to the additional risk of being exploited.

1. Are there examples of positive measures taken by your Government to prevent  persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including children in street situations or discharged from child or foster care, from being  subjected to contemporary forms of slavery?  If so, please provide details, which may include, but are not limited to, development/implementation of legislative, policy and institutional frameworks, material/financial support, and promotion of access to housing, education/training, decent work, health/public services, as well as justice and remedies.

According to the report on the situation in the field of human trafficking and the implementation of the strategy to combat human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the year 2021:

- A methodology was developed for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategy and monitoring the implementation of individual local action plans.

- Teams have been established at all levels of Government that coordinate the fight against human trafficking in their areas of competence.

- Several researches related to human trafficking were carried out by non-governmental organizations with a special focus on the treatment of victims in the legal and institutional framework, on the state of awareness of human trafficking in the public, assessment of mechanisms for the protection of children's safety, on the occurrence of begging and attitudes about begging, and on emerging forms of human trafficking in Roma communities.

- Due to the non-adoption of the Law on the Budget of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2021., the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina was unable to issue a public call for the allocation of grant funds for non-governmental organizations that manage shelters for victims of human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the lack of funding for non-governmental organizations that provide accommodation and assistance to victims of human trafficking by the state, non-governmental organizations that had signed Protocols on cooperation and accommodation with the Ministry of Security of BiH during 2021. provided accommodation for victims of human trafficking.

- During 2022., protocols were signed with non-governmental organizations for the care and protection of victims of human trafficking.

- As part of its regular work, the association "Medica" Zenica implemented a program of economic and psychosocial empowerment of women in rural areas, and one of the topics during the educational and support workshops was Human trafficking - recognition and protection.

1. Are there examples of positive measures implemented by civil society organisations or other non-governmental stakeholders in protecting and promoting the rights of persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and in preventing them from being victimised in contemporary forms of slavery?  If so, please provide details.

According to the financial availability, “Medica” Zenica provides incentives for girls and women in the form of raw materials for continuing independent work and contributing to self-employment after leaving the Safe House. Of course, the aforementioned aid packages are interventional and are insufficient for the adequate reintegration of victims of human trafficking.

1. What are remaining challenges – in law and practice - in preventing persons experiencing homelessness from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery and to prevent and eliminate homelessness in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 11.1 and international human rights law?

The policy of punishment is long-term, criminal offenses of human trafficking are often changed to those for which a lower penalty is foreseen.

Citizens' awareness of the forms of modern slavery is still low. Begging is still seen as a cultural characteristic of a nation or a justified way of improving socio-economic status.

1. What practical recommendations would you propose to overcome these ongoing challenges?

- Implement early identification programs for victims of human trafficking

- Implement programs to punish consumers of services that victims of human trafficking are forced to use - influence demand

- Faster court processes and stricter criminal policy for criminal acts of domestic violence, human trafficking

- Offer more reintegration programs for victims of human trafficking and victims of domestic violence

**[[1]](https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/call-input-homelessness-cause-and-consequence-contemporary-forms-slavery" \l "_ftnref1" \o ") Please consider both persons in street situation, but as well other forms of homelessness, such as persons living in various forms of shelters or temporary accommodation, disaster and conflict related displacement and homelessness, and persons experiencing hidden homelessness, such as persons who are involuntary staying with friends or family members due to lack of own housing.**