

YUNMUN XXXI

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

Topic: Child Trafficking on the Dark Web

Dear Delegates,

As all of you know, COVID-19 has completely transformed our lives. Many transactions have largely shifted to an online market. We are all familiar with the “surface web”, which is where all of our everyday internet interactions take place. This takes up about 0.03% of the internet<sup>1</sup>. This is the content on the internet that's available to the general public accessible via search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo.<sup>2</sup> The “deep web” is “the portion of the Internet that is hidden from conventional search engines, as by encryption; the aggregate of unindexed websites.”<sup>3</sup> While it sounds ominous, the deep web mostly contains non-indexed pages, which are just pages that belong to a new website or are recently added pages to an existing website<sup>4</sup>. The dark web, however, is what we will be focusing on in our sessions.

The “dark web” is a small fraction of the deep web that is even harder to access. It is “the portion of the internet that is intentionally hidden from search engines, uses masked IP addresses, and is accessible only with a special web browser...”<sup>5</sup> While the dark web also contains non-indexed pages, it's also full of highly illegal and dangerous activity. The dark web is full of illegal arms trading, pornography, gambling, and more. It's also home to the notorious website WikiLeaks, which is the source of many famous political scandals<sup>6</sup>. The deep web takes up most of the internet, yet is accessible to very few.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that there are around 2.5 million trafficking victims in the world at any time, however, the prosecution rate is disturbingly low<sup>7</sup>. Children make up almost one-third of all human trafficking victims<sup>8</sup>, and there is a large market for child trafficking on the dark web.

There are a number of challenges presented when the dark web is used for child trafficking. First, cryptocurrency such as bitcoin ensures the anonymity of the buyer and the receiver. Second, IP addresses and identity are all concealed when accessing the dark web through web browsers such as Tor. To quote the Global Commission on Internet Governance (GCIC) “The Dark Web poses a dilemma. Illegal markets, trolls, and online child abuse rings proliferate due to the technology of Tor and other similar systems. However, the anonymity provided by such systems gives cover for people in repressive regimes that need the protection of technology in order to surf the Web, access censored content and otherwise exercise their

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/story/whats-the-difference-between-the-deep-web-and-the-dark-web>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/surface-web>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/e/dark-web/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bluecorona.com/blog/indexed-vs-non-indexed-pages/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/e/dark-web/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/story/whats-the-difference-between-the-deep-web-and-the-dark-web>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/human-traffickers-caught-on-hidden-internet/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/stories/children-make-almost-one-third-all-human-trafficking-victims-worldwide>

genuine right to free expression.”<sup>9</sup> Since the trafficker and the buyer conceal their identities, the identity of the child, and their respective locations, it’s extremely difficult to locate and rescue victims and prosecute criminals.

This is a highly complex and nuanced issue. While I can’t address everything in this topic paper, I recommend that you all utilize the UNICEF Child Trafficking [page](#), and the WePROTECT Global Alliance [page](#). There are many incredible [resources](#) available online, so I have no doubt that you will all learn a lot while researching.

Here are a few questions to consider:

1. How can we protect children specifically vulnerable to being trafficked, such as refugee, migrant, and displaced children escaping war and violence?
2. How can the international community collaborate in order to police the dark web to end child trafficking both at home and abroad?
  - a. If your country has a specifically high rate of trafficking victims, how can you utilize international collaboration to end this crime?
  - b. If your country has a low rate of trafficking victims, how can you best aid in the fight to end trafficking?
3. How can the international community address the dangers of cryptocurrencies and the near absolute anonymity they provide in facilitating online child trafficking?
4. How do we address all of these questions in a world forever changed by the pandemic, which has greatly increased online transactions?
  - a. Though the pandemic is undoubtedly important to consider, I know we’re all sick of talking about COVID, so let’s minimize conversation on this point.

I’m looking forward to meeting you and hearing all of your ideas. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at [awinokur@mail.yu.edu](mailto:awinokur@mail.yu.edu). I’m really looking forward to hearing from all of you and reading your position papers!

All the best,

Avigail Winokur

Chair, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC\\_2017\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2017_ENG_WEB.pdf)