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## Human Smuggling and Afghanistan

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As there have been poverty and discriminations in different parts of world, there have been different types of social problems as well. Among them one of the most dominating one erupting from the countries with disorder and poverty is Human smuggling. Human smuggling is defined as 'the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents'.

The term is understood as and often used interchangeably with migrant smuggling, which is defined by the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime as "...the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national"

Human smuggling takes place when the person being smuggled gets into any sort of agreement with the smuggler and gives his consent to be smuggled to the desired country. The agreement is basically decided on a particular amount of money that has to be paid by the customer to the smuggler after reaching to the destination.

Human smuggling is not the same as the human trafficking as both the concepts differ from each other in certain ways. In human trafficking the consent of the customer is not involved and they are trafficked from one place to another for certain purposes; throughout the process they serve as a commodity that can be bought and sold whether they agree upon it or not. In most of the cases they do not even realize that they are being bought and sold.

Human smuggling is a complex phenomenon and it involves different individuals and some times groups. The whole process actually includes these individuals and groups as various players at different locations that take the customers to their desired place. The techniques used by different individuals and groups differ from one another and they include both legal and illegal ways of crossing the borders.

One of the most disturbing facts about human smuggling is that it includes the risk of life. The illegal ways that are adopted through the process include very risky attempts within which the people can easily lose their lives. However, the facts show that people consider this choice much better than the lives they are having in their own countries and happily agree to opt it. Another fact is that the people being smuggled do not always involve young men. They also include children, women and even old people and this makes the process even more pathetic.

Human smuggling is mostly a trend in the countries where the standard of life is not satisfactory and people suffer because of lack of economic facilities or they are threatened by instability that has even jeopardized their lives. Feeling dissatisfied for life or threatened by danger, they agree to give the rights of their lives to someone whom they may not even know and for that they even pay money. What they only have in their minds is the dreams of better lives, which may not be fulfilled at all but may easily fill the pocket of the ones who are involved in this dirty game.

Human smuggling has been happening in different part of the world. Over the years, smuggling has evolved into a sophisticated service industry, with certain routes and enclaves used by smugglers becoming practically institutionalized; for example: from Mexico and Central America to the United States, from West Asia through Greece and Turkey to Western Europe, and within East and Southeast Asia. Responsible for the flourishing business of people smuggling are a combination of interacting factors, from weak legislation and lax border controls to corrupt officials and the power of organized crime.

Afghanistan is a country that has been the victim of this evil. The dissatisfied, insecure and poverty stricken life has compelled the people to leave their motherland and run towards any country where they can find comfort. The series of civil wars and religious fanaticism have made the life miserable for most of the people and many have migrated out of the country, among them there are many who have opted for being smuggled.

Since the downfall of Taliban the circumstances have seemed to improve but there are serious concerns about the withdrawal of international forces and return of instability. People are thinking of securing their lives by leaving the country and the human smugglers have come to the scene to rescue them.

The number of human smugglers has risen in Kabul where they are making good money by promising the people 'bright future'. They charge people about \$ 13,000 to take them on the risky way to Europe, Canada or Australia. Some of the cases and statements of the people in Kabul, making this option are given below, which are enough to show how desperate the people are to leave the country and how the notorious smugglers are cashing their compulsions; Shamim Assir, 20, a thin man with a pale face and trimmed black beard from Logar, south of Kabul, is here (Kabul) to chase up a Turkish visa, which he paid for three months ago but has still not materialised.

"I want to leave my home for a better life, the life is horrible in Logar," he says. "The security situation is worsening day after day, there is no work for us, we cannot even roam around freely, there is no future," he adds, lines wrinkling his young face. "In Logar, if you work for the government, the Taliban will arrest you or even kill you. You either work for them or get beaten or killed."

"If you want to go to Turkey, you have to pay \$4,000 to get your visa but it will cost you \$13,000 if you want to reach Europe via Ukraine and Russia," says one trader at the market, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Most of those who come here are very young, in their 20s," he says, claiming to have a waiting list of 2,000 Afghans willing to take on dangerous journeys to escape. "If you pay less, you have to take a bus from Kabul to Iran via Nimruz province in western Afghanistan and then be smuggled to Turkey, Greece, France or Germany," he tells AFP.

Human smuggling is really a serious crime and all the ways that strengthen the process must be checked properly through strong legal measures. At the same time Afghan government must make sure that ordinary people are provided the rudimentary requirements of life and stable political and social circumstances so that they should not go for this option.