

**Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants:  
Addressing the use of technologies to recruit victims of  
trafficking in persons**

**Organized by:**

**Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SSM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Guatemala (SVET), within the framework of the mechanism of the Eighth Meeting of National Authorities on Trafficking in Persons**

3 September 2025

## Background

The smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons are complex and deeply interrelated criminal phenomena that affect millions of people around the world. These crimes represent a serious violation of fundamental human rights and generate enormous economic benefits for the criminal organizations that perpetrate them. In the specific context of Latin America and the Caribbean, these criminal activities have been systematically exploited by transnational organized crime networks that benefit economically from the exploitation of people by taking advantage of the conditions of social, economic and political vulnerability that prevail in the region, as well as the high levels of corruption and impunity.

Criminal networks engaged in human trafficking and migrant smuggling have evolved into increasingly sophisticated and adaptable structures. These organizations frequently operate under the guise of seemingly legitimate business activities, posing a significant challenge to the authorities tasked with detecting, investigating, and prosecuting them. The ability of these networks to mimic legal economic activities, combined with their transnational nature, has greatly complicated law enforcement efforts.

In today's digital age, organized crime has strategically incorporated information and telecommunications technologies into its operations. This technological adaptation has radically transformed the methods of recruitment, control and exploitation of victims, as well as the management of the financial resources derived from these criminal activities.

Social networks have become fundamental tools for the identification and recruitment of potential victims. Through fake profiles and social engineering techniques, traffickers can identify people in vulnerable situations, establish bonds of trust and manipulate their victims remotely. These digital platforms offer criminals unprecedented access to detailed personal information and the ability to segment and specifically target vulnerable populations.

Text messaging systems and communication applications have facilitated the coordination of criminal activities, allowing for more fluid communication between the different links in the criminal chain. The availability of message encryption systems has provided these organizations with a level of security in their communications that was previously reserved for government agencies and organizations with advanced technical resources.

The use of virtual currencies and cryptocurrencies has revolutionized the management of illicit assets generated by human trafficking and migrant smuggling. These financial technologies have allowed criminal organizations to transfer, transform and custody funds more easily and with less risk of detection by traditional financial control authorities. More recently, the incorporation of artificial intelligence technologies has opened up new possibilities for the sophistication of criminal operations. These tools can be used to automate recruitment processes, create more convincing

fake profiles, analyze large volumes of data to identify potential victims, and optimize transport and exploitation routes and methods.

In the context of the mechanism of the Eighth Meeting of National Authorities on Trafficking in Persons, chaired by Guatemala, this webinar will discuss the complexity and constant evolution of these criminal phenomena from the perspective of offering a comprehensive, coordinated and technically advanced response by national and international authorities. It is essential to develop institutional capacities that make it possible to understand, detect and effectively combat the use of technologies by organized crime. In this context, collaboration between specialized institutions such as the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security of the Organization of American States (OAS) and national entities such as the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Guatemala (SVET) is essential to develop effective strategies for the prevention, investigation and punishment of these crimes.

### **Objective**

This webinar seeks to strengthen the technical and operational capacities of actors involved in the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Through the specialized analysis of the use of technologies for the recruitment of victims, it seeks to provide conceptual and methodological tools that allow a better understanding and approach to these criminal modalities in the regional context.

In this same sense, it is expected to generate specialized knowledge, promote the exchange of experiences between countries in the region and strengthen international cooperation in the response to Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

### **Audience**

Derived from the importance of creating and updating knowledge on these transnational organized crime crimes, the webinar will be open to all OAS Missions and Permanent Observers, beyond all audiences and transmitted through the zoom platform with extension of its capacity through Facebook Live of both institutions (SVET and OAS).

### **Registration**

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/09cb59cd-7a37-49e0-b6cf-6551d3bff820@4fdc3f23-1506-4175-958c-37999cee0941>

<b>Agenda</b> <b>September 3, 2025 (Guatemala time)</b>	
9:00 – 9:20	Opening Session <b>Danissa Ramírez</b> , Executive Secretary of the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Guatemala (SVET) <b>Gastón Schulmeister</b> , Director of the Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC) of the OAS
9:20 – 9:30	Presentation of the webinar methodology SVET, Alejandra Flores
9:30 – 10:10	<b><i>Panel 1: detection of criminal patterns related to human trafficking in digital media</i></b>  <b><i>Modalities of Sexual Exploitation, Extortion and Forced Labor of Women and Children in Digital Media</i></b> International Justice Mission (IMJ), Eric Heintz y Chris Conrad  Moderator: John Grajales, Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC), OAS
10:10 – 10:35	Q&A session
10:35 – 11:15	<b><i>Panel 2: Tools for the prevention and identification of human trafficking in digital media</i></b>  <b><i>The use of technology in the fight against human trafficking and exploitation: the SALUDETECT digital tool</i></b> Diaconia, Mónica Alario Gavilán  <b><i>Trafficking, Smuggling, and New Technologies: Global Challenges and Recommendations</i></b> UNODC, Carlos Pérez  Moderator: Jane Piazer, Department of Public Safety (DPS), OAS
11:15 – 11:35	Q&A session
11:35 – 11:45	Conclusions and closing <b>Anna Uchoa</b> , Chief of Section for the Prevention of Violence and Crime, DPS/OAS