



Talitha Kum Kenya

RELIGIOUS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

POLICY BRIEF

Border Policing and Trafficking in Persons

What 83 frontline officers at Lungalunga and Taveta told us they did not know — and what closing that gap would take.

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Series
Policy Brief

IN BRIEF

The gap is not willingness. It is definition.

In February 2025, Talitha Kum Kenya ran awareness sessions for border police at two of Kenya's busiest crossings. Officers were engaged and willing. What they lacked was a working definition of trafficking wide enough to recognise most of it.

33

officers trained at Lungalunga,
Kwale County

50

officers trained at the Taveta
border

2

sessions, 13 and 15 February
2025

KEY FINDING

Officers' knowledge was largely confined to the most visible forms of trafficking — forced labour and sexual exploitation. Organ trafficking, domestic servitude and child exploitation in forced begging were largely unknown. An officer who cannot name a form of trafficking cannot identify a victim of it.

What we are asking for

- A Training of Trainers programme, so that capability stays at the border after we leave.
- Specialised follow-on training covering the hidden forms of exploitation.
- A standing channel between border commands and anti-trafficking organisations.

BACKGROUND

Why border posts, and why now

Human trafficking is a serious ethical issue that demands the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders to combat effectively. Recognising this urgency, Talitha Kum Kenya initiated a border police awareness programme to strengthen law enforcement's understanding of trafficking in persons.

Sessions were held on 13 February 2025 in Lungalunga, Kwale County, and on 15 February 2025 in Taita Taveta County. They were organised in collaboration with Officers Commanding Police Divisions, Officers Commanding Stations and border commanders, ensuring that the personnel who set local practice were in the room.

The programme addresses the protection and prosecution pillars of the Palermo Protocol, which aims to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute traffickers. Border posts are where those three obligations meet a moving population and a few minutes of decision time.



Toll free 0800 724 690

A Talitha Kum Kenya facilitator leads a session with border officers, February 2025.

FINDINGS

Four things the sessions surfaced

1

Understanding was surface level

Most participating officers held only a general awareness of trafficking, built from the most publicised cases rather than from the legal definition.

2

Hidden forms were largely unknown

Organ trafficking, domestic servitude and child exploitation in forced begging were new to many officers. These are precisely the forms least likely to present as a complaint.

3

The scale of networks was a surprise

Many officers expressed surprise at the depth and reach of trafficking networks, and said so openly. Recognising an organised operation changes how a single case is handled.

4

Officers asked for more, unanimously

There was a unanimous request for continued sensitisation and for Training of Trainers initiatives. Officers themselves identified the knowledge gap as a barrier to effective intervention.

The officers recognised that their current knowledge gaps could hinder effective interventions — and said so themselves.

Session report, February 2025

That last point matters more than the other three. A training need identified by the trainer is a proposal. A training need identified unanimously by the officers who work the border is a finding, and it is the basis of the recommendations in this brief.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The same gap exists in the community

Alongside the border sessions, we took the message to coastal media. Media coverage plays a crucial role in community sensitisation, providing a platform to educate the public on trafficking and on the steps communities can take to protect themselves.

OUTLET	REACH
TV47	6,885,000 viewers
Radio Msenangu	1,500,000 listeners
Radio Tumaini – Voi	500,000 listeners
Baraka FM	200,000 listeners

Listener feedback indicated a strong appetite for more. Audiences wanted to understand the different forms of trafficking, how traffickers operate, and how to identify and report cases.

One consistent complaint: the interactive call-in segments were too short. Listeners asked for longer live interaction to allow deeper discussion and personal testimony. Several also pressed for outdoor sensitisation in grassroots areas where media access is limited.

WHAT THIS TELLS US

Demand is not the constraint. In both the police sessions and the broadcasts, the people closest to the problem asked for more time and more depth than the format allowed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What we propose

1. Establish a Training of Trainers cohort at each border command

Officers asked for this directly. A resident trainer at each post converts a one-off session into a standing capability, and survives the transfer of any individual officer.

2. Extend training beyond the visible forms

Curriculum should cover organ trafficking, domestic servitude and forced begging explicitly, with indicators an officer can apply during a routine check.

3. Formalise the channel between border commands and anti-trafficking organisations

Continuous engagement was emphasised throughout. A named contact on each side improves coordination, victim identification and case handling.

4. Pair broadcast awareness with grassroots outreach

Listeners themselves identified the limits of radio and television in reaching the most vulnerable. On-the-ground campaigns should follow each media cycle.

Next steps. Talitha Kum Kenya is ready to deliver the Training of Trainers component in partnership with border commands. Discussions on timing and funding are at stage to be confirmed by the coordinator. For enquiries about this brief, contact named contact at info@talithakumraht.org.



ABOUT US

More than just a cause, a calling

In 2016, TIK-RAHT began in Kenya during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, initiated by a collective effort of consecrated religious, lay women and men. Inspired by Pope Francis' call to embody acts of mercy, particularly the corporal works of mercy, the organisation focuses on reaching out to and assisting those who reside on the margins of society.

VISION

Inspired by the mercy of God, we envision a world free from human trafficking.

MISSION

To uphold human dignity at all costs — from modern-day slavery to freedom — collaborating to eradicate human trafficking.

Our values. Unity in Diversity · Mutual Support · Integrity · Honesty · Confidentiality · Prayer

Our approach: the four Ps. **Prayer** — rooted in faith, uplifting both survivors and perpetrators. **Protection** — psychosocial support, medical aid and shelter for the holistic well-being of survivors. **Prevention** — community workshops, training and media advocacy. **Partnerships** — collaborating with a diverse network of stakeholders.

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Sources. Figures, dates, locations and findings are drawn from "Border police sensitization program" by Sr Mercy, published on talithakumraht.org on 26 February 2025, which reports the Lungalunga and Taveta sessions and the accompanying media programme. The recommendations restate conclusions set out in that article. Vision, mission, values and the four Ps are quoted from the organisation's About Us and Vision, Mission and Values pages.

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