

# **Journalism vis-à-vis Human Trafficking: Review of the Russian Media**

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# Journalism vis-à-vis Human Trafficking: Review of the Russian Media

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## Executive Summary

The review of the Russian Media starts with an **Introduction** providing a brief assessment of the scope of human trafficking in the Russian Federation. This assessment is based on official data made public by the Research Institute of the General Prosecutor's Office, multiple NGOs' reports, research and estimates made by the ILO and IOM, country visit reports to Russia and other CIS participating States by the OSCE Special Representative for Combating THB, and personal involvement in interviewing victims of trafficking who lived through various forms of THB-related exploitation and were rescued jointly by NGOs and the law enforcement in 2017-2019.

Human trafficking remains an extremely hidden crime, be it transnational or internal, quite difficult for disclosure and proper qualification. Apparently, it is a criminal continuum consisting of several illegal acts, means and purposes each of which has to be proven. The major part of THB cases remains beyond official statistics due to a complex nature of the crime, gaps in the legislation, reluctance of former victims, for various reasons, to participate in investigation and prosecution of traffickers, deportation of labour migrants, who were put into an irregular situation by their employers, before their identification as victims of forced labour, and due to many other reasons. To some extent it explains why THB has not been recognized as a serious threat and a state priority, being kept on the margins of everybody's attention, and why the society underestimates the risks of modern slavery. This is the context in which the Media acquires a very special role of pioneering in awareness raising, unveiling the issue and bringing it to the daylight from the deep shadow of negligence. Such unique responsibility of the Media is underlined by various manuals specifically designed for journalists by Media associations and International Organizations which emphasize their duty to change the overall attitude towards trafficked persons, and to create a climate of intolerance towards all forms of exploitation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, please see: <http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/en/media/guidelines.html> ; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002211/221199e.pdf> ; [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85454/9241546255\\_rus.pdf?sequence=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85454/9241546255_rus.pdf?sequence=1) ; <https://journ.bsu.edu.ru/kodeks/principles.pdf> ; <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/BP012TheRoleoftheMedia.pdf> ; [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/HT\\_Toolkit08\\_English.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/HT_Toolkit08_English.pdf) ; [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings\\_and\\_greek\\_mass\\_media-guide\\_for\\_journalists\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/trafficking_in_human_beings_and_greek_mass_media-guide_for_journalists_en_1.pdf) ; and many others. All references accessed on 20 May 2019.

**Literature Review**, covering similar research published in Russia in the first decade of the XXI century, permitted comparing the state of the Media in the period right after the adoption of the first legally binding definition of human trafficking at the UN level<sup>2</sup> and its engagement in reporting on THB-related matters in the course of the second decade. One of the main conclusions drawn from these studies reflected a seriously underused potential of the Media and its ineffectiveness in addressing both - the state agencies and the society. The Media failed in encouraging the state and the society to come to a crucial turning point in their approach against human trafficking. Furthermore, authors of previous Media reviews claimed that mass Media was responsible for creating sexual stereotypes and portraying women just as sexual objects. It led to negative consequences, such as distorted attitude mixing together prostitution, pornography and sexual slavery. Media demonstrated no sustainability in covering THB cases to form a strong social protest against all manifestations of trafficking. There was no integral vision of THB as a criminal multifaceted phenomenon causing gross human rights violations. Somehow it explains why never ever the Media reported on the fate of the victims – any assistance provided, any rehabilitation programmes accomplished, any referral and safe return organized, any risk assessment done before their return to the countries of origin.

**Methodology** used to develop the review nowadays was designed by the CBSS within the current project. It envisaged an analysis of over fifty relevant sources – articles, commentaries, TV talk-shows, blogs, and documentaries, not older than 1 January 2010 –in line with the Protocol suggested by the CBSS. The sources reflected a broad geographical scope and even a broader variety of printed and digital Media. Qualitative interviews were carried out with journalists who have had sufficient experience and expertise to compare the impact of the Media in 2000-2010 and in 2010-2019. Due to objective reasons, examples of investigative work done by journalists were limited. On the contrary, much more than before, the Media demonstrated the role of NGOs and evidence they could provide to produce most impressive and convincing reports.

To decide upon THB framing appeared to be not an easy task. With an exception of short reports based on the information provided by the law enforcement and framed as issues of prosecution, the majority of articles, interviews and case stories were framed as a complex combination of human rights violations, security issues, immigration, forced prostitution, forced labour and forced begging. Nevertheless, the analysis of 65 samples of the Media might be too narrow to assess Russian Media which, according to the Register of the Federal Service of Mass Communications and ITs, as of 17 April 2017, included 79786 titles of periodicals. All in all, **Main Findings** were made on the basis of an overview of printed media and their internet editions, online media, blogs, TV channels, radio channels, and news agencies. These findings are summarized in the **Conclusion** which considers also the opinion of journalists interviewed in the course of drafting. They expressed a clear concern related to a decline of influence that the Media could and should be engaged in and decrease of international cooperation with IOM and other International Organizations and foreign NGOs. Also, on decline was investigative journalism, due to new legal initiatives, especially in case the

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<sup>2</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html> accessed on 20 May 2019.

investigation could disclose corruption and complicity of officials. The recent case of persecution against Ivan Golunov, a journalist from Meduza.io who dedicated his work to the investigation of corruption in various business sectors and was detained being suspected of drug-traffic, showed how easy it was to abuse the rule of law to satisfy the interest of those affected by his investigation. The whole plot was proven to be an insinuation and all accusations were taken off within 4 days, but this was probably the first outstanding case of the Media consolidation and mass civil society manifestations across Russia and abroad that led to a happy end.

Irrespective of negative tendencies as seen by journalists themselves and characteristic for the last decade, it would be fair to mention that the Media reflected more vivid presence of Russian NGOs, those few that remained active in countering modern slavery and providing assistance to the victims (“Alternative”, Charity Foundation Safe House, and some others), better co-operation between NGOs and local law enforcement in solving concrete cases and in rescuing trafficked persons, though on an *ad hoc* basis, and was doing a lot to achieve better awareness of the society on the issue of labour trafficking and other forms of exploitation. These positive findings, unfortunately, did not automatically lead to a decisive turn in the official approach towards human trafficking, it still remains in the trap of official statistics showing just the tip of the iceberg.

The scope of the problem requires another, much higher, level of Media activities undertaken jointly with the civil society to engage decision-makers and all other stakeholders, to make them interested in joining forces and in taking strong action against THB, knowing for sure why and what the state and the society would lose by ignoring this problem. The necessity to react promptly to the signals coming from the Media was confirmed by President Putin at the recent Media Forum of the All-Russia People’s Front in Saint-Petersburg (May 2019): Media and the society do have to be heard by authorities.

## **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a widely spread but still extremely hidden crime in the Russian Federation, and the majority of THB cases, if identified and prosecuted, finally end up being qualified as instances of illegal migration, illegal deprivation of freedom, illegal adoption or violations of labour law. No wonder, the official statistics presented in the annual reports of the Ministry of Interior<sup>3</sup>, reflects just those exceptional and rare cases that fall under the definition of THB of the Russian Criminal Code and hardly reaches 30 cases per year. At the same time, other data provided by the Research Institute of the General Prosecutor’s Office and the assessment based on the Palermo Protocol definition, increases the over-all number of criminal cases (per year) related to human trafficking up to tens of thousands<sup>4</sup>. This discrepancy creates a significant challenge for all: for the state which has no serious

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<sup>3</sup>For example, the Ministry of Interior Report-2016 “Ensuring Public Order and Combating Organized Crime”, accessed on 9.05.2019 at [https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/upload/site1/document\\_file/godovoy\\_otchet\\_2016.pdf](https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/upload/site1/document_file/godovoy_otchet_2016.pdf) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>4</sup> Sergey Vinokurov, presentation of statistics at the CoE Roundtable in Irkutsk, March 2018, included in the CoE Manual of Combating THB and Providing Protection to the Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, HELP Programme, November 2018, available at the CoE website: <https://www.coe.int/web/help/home> (registration is needed to get access to the Manual as a part of Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals online course).

arguments to recognize THB as a priority issue; for the society which is deprived of a real assessment of THB-related risks and, having over 20-mln vulnerable persons of population, lacks proper awareness and prevention campaigns, and for anti-trafficking NGOs that do not get sufficient funding to provide assistance and protection to the victims of modern slavery.

Drawing from the data collected by Russian anti-trafficking NGOs and reports published by various international organizations, such as the ILO, the IOM, the UNODC, etc., it would not be an exaggeration to say that Russia remains a country of origin for tens of thousands of women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation transnationally, a country of transit for trafficked persons on their way to other countries to the West of Russia, and a destination for hundreds of thousands – those trafficked to Russia from the CIS countries, Nigeria, Vietnam, North Korea, China etc., and from remote areas of Russia to the regions of better economic opportunities - internal trafficking affecting men, women and children is considered by experts as an overwhelming trend.

Forms of THB-related exploitation are multiple and vary from “traditional” sexual exploitation (including porno-production and sex services online) to forced and bonded labour, domestic servitude, trafficking for exploitation in forced begging, in forced criminality (such as forced cultivation drugs and drug trafficking), for exploitation by terrorists or illegal armed contingents, for illegal extraction of organs for transplanted, for drug testing (a relatively new form of THB-related exploitation), for social benefits fraud, and child trafficking for all forms of exploitation mentioned above.

The socio-political context in which the Russian media tries to address trafficking in human beings poses more of a challenge rather than a helpful environment for the work of journalists, especially those trying to investigate trafficking cases: it is affected by the absence of an anti-trafficking infrastructure created and functional in the majority of other countries– a profile anti-trafficking law guaranteeing victims’ protection, a coordinating mechanism (National Coordinator) and an independent monitoring institution (National Rapporteur), a National Referral Mechanism, and a National Action Plan. In other words, journalists wishing to contribute to the fight against human trafficking and to empower trafficked persons are pioneering, together with Russian NGOs, in their efforts to unveil the issue and bring it to the daylight from the deep shadow of negligence.

The current anti-trafficking situation justifies the need for the Russian Media to become a much stronger social partner whose role cannot be overestimated in the prevention of modern slavery. In general, “Media is instrumental in raising awareness of the public at large and in attracting attention of the authorities to the issue, in changing the overall attitude towards trafficked persons, and in creating a climate of intolerance towards all forms of exploitation. Furthermore, it has the capacity to improve the response of states and people to this crime and promote a human rights-based approach in three, or even four-P dimensions of counter-trafficking strategies – Prosecution, Prevention, Protection and Partnerships”<sup>5</sup>. This is relevant for all countries on Earth, and this is true

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<sup>5</sup> Reporting on Trafficking in Human Beings: Collection of Resources for Journalists. Review under the ICMPD Project “Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Organized Crime – Phase 2” funded by the European Commission and implemented by ICMPD in cooperation with FEI and FIIAPP, 2017.

for the current situation in Russia demanding a combination of anti-trafficking policies and measures. Media being the one.

## Literature Review

In the course of the first decade of the Millennium, there were few efforts to assess the effectiveness and compliance of the Media in addressing trafficking in human beings and analyzing how it was framing modern slavery so that to meet the THB challenge, wake up the society that remained ignorant of suffering experienced by the victims of THB-related exploitation and prevent it from further spreading, if not eradication for good. The first impetus to assess the role of the Media in counter-trafficking was given by research “Trafficking in Human Beings in the Russian Federation” presented to the Media community by Elena Tyuryukanova in 2006<sup>6</sup>. It had a blow-up effect, and caused a series of publications and reports, development of new approaches, a broader view on the entire problem.

Right after that, in 2007, the Faculty of Journalism (Moscow State University) directed a first review of 200 periodicals of federal, regional and local level with a view to determine the role of the Media in combating THB. This review was further developed a year later by a prominent expert in journalism, Prof. I. Dzyaloshinsky and one of the best Russian researchers on issues of migration and human trafficking E. Tyuryukanova – **“Trafficking in Human Beings: Media as a Resource of Countering Modern Slavery in Social Partnership”**<sup>7</sup>, and followed by a number of analytical articles, for example by Moscow State University professor Olga Smirnova, Head of Gender Studies Centre - **“Media and Human Trafficking: Gender Aspects”**<sup>8</sup>.

This fundamental study by I. Dzyaloshinsky and E. Tyuryukanova mentioned above and positioned as “a mirror reflecting THB in the Russian Media», was based on a qualitative - quantitative analysis of over 1500 periodicals of federal, regional, city-wide and corporate level in turn divided into those of high quality, so called “mass” or popular newspapers or magazines, and tabloids. In other words, the division was based on the criteria of quality and territory. The study focussed on structural elements of texts collected and concluded that just 12 % of publications contained an analysis of the THB problem and noted just a slight, hardly expressed intention to contribute to its practical solution in 25,8 % of publications. 61,8% were limited to the description of facts supplemented by brief comments, nevertheless they served a goal to inform their audience and provoke negative attitude towards traffickers. It is difficult to say whether it was sufficient to stimulate any anti-trafficking action. There was no call for it yet.

Though the Media, analysed in the study, covered a variety of issues, such as deprivation of freedom, coercion, illegal medical experiments, child trafficking, child labour, pornography, and trafficking

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<sup>6</sup> Елена Тюрюканова, Торговля людьми в Российской Федерации. Обзор и анализ текущей ситуации по проблеме, 2006, ЮНИСЕФ, [https://www.un.org/ru/rights/trafficking/human\\_trafficking\\_russia.pdf](https://www.un.org/ru/rights/trafficking/human_trafficking_russia.pdf) accessed 11 May 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Торговля людьми: СМИ как ресурс общественного противодействия современному рабству, 2008, <http://moscow.iom.int/russian/publications/smi.pdf> accessed 8 May 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Торговля людьми в гендерной проблематике СМИ, <http://www.mediascope.ru/node/1130> accessed 7 May 2019.

across borders, half of the publications were short of any author's assessment of the THB situation, and the other half, if any, was supplemented by some expert's opinion, not by the editorial staff.

As for the "heroes" of publications, there was an interesting finding stating that federal Media (up to 50% of them) mentioned the participation of state (law enforcement) officials in disclosing THB cases, as well as of NGOs and individuals, while tabloids and news-agencies did not bother to underline the role of NGOs in any anti-trafficking activities. Federal media was reluctant to come out with recommendations how to enhance countering THB, and just 30% of publications took the risk to add recommendations given by some outsiders – experts not belonging to the editorial staff. At the same time articles written by serious experts and providing analysis were not that easy reading and missed the point of reaching those who needed it most – persons vulnerable to THB and potential victims.

It was also noted that there was a certain division between various types of the Media in terms of focusing on the global THB situation (more typical for federal Media), on THB cases at the national level (popular "mass" newspapers), while local cases were mostly reflected in tabloids which were also known for their sensational approach and thematic preferences related to sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution.

Rather interesting was the finding of how many articles were dedicated to internal trafficking – up to 40% -which apparently reflected the high ratio of the THB crime committed within Russian borders against its nationals. Other figures (30% of articles portraying Russia as a country of origin, 17% - as a country of destination, and 14% - as a transit country) seem not necessarily corresponding with the reality.

The main conclusion drawn from the study – the goal of the media coverage limited to information - points to a hugely underused potential of the media, and its mere and obvious recommendations presented in the minority of publications (to provide assistance to the victims, to establish service centers, to outreach vulnerable population) were ineffective at both levels – the level of State agencies and the level of the society. The Media failed in leading the State and the society to a crucial turning point in the approach against human trafficking.

Gender aspects of trafficking, as we can conclude from the analysis provided in the other quoted source<sup>9</sup>, were thematically reflected by the Russian Media through addressing such issues as sexual exploitation, domestic slavery, forced marriage, surrogate motherhood, but these reflections definitely were short of systematic analysis. "Journalists' misunderstanding of the reasons and sources of the problem, their unwillingness to consider various aspects of the problem of human trafficking and their insufficient skills brought about wrong stereotypes, spread prejudice and misapprehension on the subject and increased intolerance to the victims of sexual exploitation"<sup>10</sup>. Prof. Olga Smirnova, author of this review, was of an opinion that the Media was affected by "erotization" and "pornographization", advertising and exploiting female bodies and using it for

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mediascope.ru/node/1130> accessed 7 May 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Op.cit.

profiting. The mass Media was responsible for creating sexual stereotypes and portraying women just as sexual objects. It led to negative consequences, such as distorted attitude towards prostitution, pornography and sexual slavery. The level of negligence was quite high, and some journalists argued that the threat of THB was rather overestimated. Quite a number of Media outlets were often used for advertising sexual exploitation by publishing offers of sexual services or fake vacancy notices inviting “pretty girls” to work in saunas or hotels and actually promoting brothels<sup>11</sup>.

Prof. Smirnova stated that the Russian Media did not present any systematic analysis of sexual slavery and related gender issues, spread stereotypes and prejudices and contributed to an atmosphere of hostility towards victims of THB for sexual exploitation. She noted several reasons underlying this disturbing situation: reluctance to recognize the mere fact of the existence of sexual slavery, underestimation of THB-related threats and its links to gender inequality, lack of awareness among journalists themselves, sexism and sensationalism.

One more review of the Russian Media was published a year later, in 2013, - a Manual designed for high school media and communication students and post graduates “**Media against THB**”<sup>12</sup>, a project accomplished jointly by the Moscow State University (Faculty of Journalism), OSCE and Russian Union of Journalists. Though targeted at raising awareness of the problem among future Media professionals, the review contained chapters dedicated to the framing of THB problem in the Russian Media, methods of addressing the problem in the TV and radio broadcasting Media, ways and means that journalists use to treat vulnerable groups, ethical principles of interviewing the victims of trafficking, social advertising and how it was used to solve related problems, examples of THB coverage, the role of IT in the context of trafficking, and a quantitative analysis of publications, including on the Internet, on labour migrants’ integration (those from Central Asia).

The Manual, covering a much longer period, provided an overview of transformation that the Media had experienced in the course of “perestroika”, in late 80-s and early 90-s of the XX century, when there appeared first instances of investigative journalism against organized crime (1988, “The Lion Has Jumped” by Yury Schekochikhin) and they gave a start for a series of articles and documentaries about slavery of seasonal workers in Central Asia, practices similar to slavery in the relationship between some high level officials in this region and their subordinates, especially in rural areas, cases of coercion and slave labour of prisoners of war in Afghanistan practiced by Soviet armed forces, about slavery-like conditions of agricultural workers in Soviet “collective farms”. Articles on THB as such appeared a bit later, in mid-90-s, and the topic was limited mainly to trafficking in women in the context of prostitution as “a part of criminal business”. Having no knowledge of the subject, authors were portraying trafficked women as adventurous, looking for easy money abroad, while their initial decisions were considered voluntary and dictated by low morals. Article written by Yury Schekochikhin in 1994 (liberal Literature Gazette (“Literaturnaya Gazeta”), “Russian Slaves” about trafficking in women to the USA, again in the context of countering organized crime, presented

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<sup>11</sup> Prostitution is considered an administrative offence, while enticing into prostitution and organization of prostitution fall under criminal regulations in Russia.

<sup>12</sup> «СМИ против торговли людьми», 2013, <https://www.osce.org/ru/secretariat/100483?download=true> accessed 10 May 2019.

probably the first attempt to analyze the roots of the problem. At the same time federal women's Media ("Woman-labourer" ("Rabotnitsa"), "Woman-Peasant" ("Krestjanka"), and many others ignored the problem, while others, also at the federal level, limited themselves to information about international anti-trafficking events, news in the legislation, or ample facts of anti-trafficking police operations abroad. "Independent Gazette" ("Nezavisimaya Gazeta"), featured THB just as a problem of gender discrimination and part of global organized crime. These instances up to the years of early Millennium had no sustainability to form a strong social protest against all manifestations of trafficking. There was no integral vision of THB as a criminal multifaceted phenomenon.

Another review on the same issue worth mentioning was done in 2011 by the Russian Union of Journalists, Centre on contemporary problems of the Media and supported by the UN Women "**The Image of a Labour Migrant from Central Asia in the Mirror of Moscow and National Russian Periodicals**"<sup>13</sup>. Its authors analyzed publications in Russian and Moscow newspapers ("Izvestiya" («Известия»), "Noviye Izvestija" («Новые известия»), "Novaya Gazeta" («Новая газета»), "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" («Независимая газета»), "Rossijskaya Gazeta" («Российская газета»), "Moskovskie Novosti" («Московские новости»), "Moskovskiy Komsomolets" («Московский комсомолец») и "Vecherniya Moskva" («Вечерняя Москва»)), as well as web-sites of the same periodicals, web-site of "Echo of Moscow" radio-channel, and online publications within the scope of one month in spring of 2011. Those were just 34 articles, mostly in «Rossijskaya Gazeta» и «Moskovskiy Komsomolets», and, accordingly, on their web-sites. Nothing related to THB was found in «Moskovskie Novosti», «Izvestiya», «Noviye Izvestiya», «Nezavisimaya Gazeta» – irrespective of the fact that the latter were known for addressing human rights issues more often than others. The quantitative analysis showed that high quality periodicals well known for their human rights approach had a minimal interest in addressing THB – at least 10 times less than addressing migration. The majority of publications presented just brief information on court decisions against traffickers, disclosure of an underground enterprise that was found guilty of using forced labour, or of a brothel. They were placed in sections of criminal news, or news as such, and more often – online than in hard copies of the same periodicals. Investigative journalism, if any, was rather an exception than a rule, reports were full of shocking details – more of psychological nature. Heroes of the reports were mostly victims deceived by traffickers, and cynical criminals who were collaborating with corrupt law enforcement and migration officials. Every second publication pointed to the complicity and abetting of low level policemen or migration officers at the local level, and none reported about higher level officers' involvement. Quite typical were articles describing a case of a migrant who managed to escape from traffickers, to seek help from the police, resulting in successful prosecution and punishment of the criminal group and – deportation of the migrant. Never ever the Media reported on the fate of the victims – any assistance provided, any rehabilitation programmes accomplished, any referral and safe return organized, any risk assessment done before their return to the countries

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<sup>13</sup>"Образ трудового мигранта из Центральной Азии в зеркале московской и национальной российской периодики", Материалы исследования российской прессы и Интернета, Союз журналистов России, Центр изучения актуальных проблем современной журналистики, ООН Женщины, 2011, <http://moscow.iom.int/russian/publications/CARMP/UNW%20pubs/Obraz%20trudovogo%20migranta%20iz%20Centralnoj%20Azii%20v%20zerkale%20Moskovskoj%20i%20Rossijskoj%20periodiki.pdf> accessed 14 May 2019.

of origin. The other type of articles focused on disclosers of brothels, or channels of sex trafficking abroad. Publications that became a subject for analysis in that last review did not touch the deep roots of the problem, neither ways to eradicate socio-economic reasons as push-factor, did not motivate to know more what happened to the rescued victims afterwards.

Sources mentioned above provide a good starting point to compare the Media coverage of trafficking of the two consecutive decades (2000-2010 and 2011-2019), to identify trends, whatever they are, and evolution in the approach of journalists towards the phenomenon which has shown no signs of decrease irrespective of better awareness of the public-at-large.

### **Methodology Used**

The methodology, chosen to achieve the aim of the review and provide an opportunity to assess the ability of the Media to play its role in the prevention of human trafficking, was similar to the methodologies of content-analysis used by other Russian experts. Information was collected with a view to have sufficient qualitative and quantitative material demonstrating most vividly how the Media is framing trafficking in human beings nowadays, in what manner the problem is presented, what is most prevalent – just pure facts or serious analysis, a brief reiteration of facts or a thorough discussion on possible ways and means to eradicate modern slavery.

Over sixty relevant sources – articles, commentaries, TV talk-shows, blogs, and documentaries, not older than 1 January 2010 – were analyzed in line with the Protocol suggested by the CBSS within the current project. The sources reflected a broad geographical scope and even a broader variety of printed and digital Media.

Three qualitative interviews were carried out with journalists who have had sufficient experience and expertise to compare the impact of the Media in 2000-2010 and in 2010-2019 in this particular field and identify current obstacles preventing the Media from being more influential in prioritizing THB remits and making it equally significant for the State and for the society.

To our regret, examples of investigative work done by journalists were limited and presented in a few documentaries available online or published in the most popular printed press and Internet editions. A rare good example of investigative journalism was included in the Manual mentioned above – it is an article by Lidia Grafova “**How to Win in the Fight against Slavery**”<sup>14</sup>. Equally important in terms of gaps and shortages to overcome in the future, there was no preventative initiatives carried out by mass Media. On the contrary, examples of mass Media and NGOs working together are multiple and their co-operation result in producing most impressive and convincing material be it reflected in a documentary done with the participation of NGOs or a TV talk show. Certainly, NGOs can tell also about lessons learned in the course of collaboration with the Media (and mistakes to avoid, such as inhumane treatment of trafficked persons, or stereotyping, or simplification of the problem) that they have experienced.

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<sup>14</sup>«СМИ против торговли людьми», 2013, <https://www.osce.org/ru/secretariat/100483?download=true>, page 162-166.

This methodology permitted to figure out how does the news media frame human trafficking – as a human rights issue, or mostly as a security problem, does it focus on prostitution or mixes THB with irregular migration, what is more important for the Media – prosecution or victim protection and rehabilitation, and finally, whether the Media has contributed to the evolution of the approach to THB, if any, at the level of State and in the society-at-large within the last decade.

Nevertheless, the analysis of 65 samples of the Media has to be seen in the context of a greater variety of Russian Media. A Register belonging to the Federal Service of mass communications and ITs, as of 17 April 2017, included 79786 titles of periodicals, two thirds of it being printed media. Of them, magazines were up to 37%, newspapers – up to 28%, followed by bulletins, and others. Digital Media made 11 %, mostly representing their printed versions, 10% belonged to TV, 7% - to the radio, 2% - to news agencies, and 3% - others<sup>15</sup>. It is a huge industry, with a number of employees reaching no less than 180-200 thousand journalists, plus technical staff, distributors and other professionals – all in all up to half a million<sup>16</sup>.

Other sources provide rating of newspapers depending on the audience preferences. For example, the list of ten top newspapers is formed by “Izvestiya”, “Kommersant”, “Vedomosti”, “Rossijskaya Gazeta”, “Moskovskiy Komsomolets”, “Komsomolskaya Pravda,” “Novaya Gazeta”, “Parlamentskaya Gazeta”, “Argumenti I Facti”, and “Argumenti Nedeli”. Internet resources are rated accordingly (top ten) – Rbc.ru, Russian.rt.com, Gazeta.ru, 360tv.ru, Lenta.ru, Kp.ru, Fontanka.ru, Life.ru. Dni.ru and Meduza.io (a Russian-language digital Media registered in Latvia and, strictly speaking, not belonging to the “purely” Russian source). The TV rating list consists of REN.TV, 1<sup>st</sup> Channel, Russia 1, NTV, Russia 24, TV Channel Zvezda, TV Channel 360, 5<sup>th</sup> Channel, TV Channel Dozhdj, and Channel “Ts” (first letter of Tsentralnij).

The composition of these two ratings reflects public preferences and in this regard is rather disturbing – it makes clear that top positions are occupied by “official” periodicals and tabloids. The same features of rating are characteristic for magazines.

TV channels are recognized as the most popular source of information in Russia. In terms of rating, they are followed by news web-sites, and social Media. Preferences differ a lot depending on age and the level of education: the young prefer to obtain information from the Internet rather than from TV, while older people stick to traditional sources. Those having high school education are more flexible in using both, TV and news websites. Figures provided reflect where people prefer to get news from: 71% - TV channels, 41% - the Internet, 20% - blogs, 14% - printed Media, 14% - radio broadcasting. 43% of the audience trust the news broadcasted by the TV, 20% believe that the Internet is more reliable, 8% stand for the news from printed Media and the same number – for blogs, and only 6%

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<sup>15</sup> <https://adindex.ru/publication/analitics/channels/2017/08/21/161820.phtml> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit.

prefer getting news from the radio. These are the figures of 2018 reflecting the average, without disaggregation depending on gender, age and education<sup>17</sup>.

### Main Findings: Framing Trafficking by the Media

Among others, a number of printed Media periodicals were chosen for this review, namely “Izvestiya”, “Noviye Izvestiya”, “Rossijskaya Gazeta”, “Novaya Gazeta”, “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”, “Kommersant”, “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, and “Moskovskiy Komsomolets”. This spectrum represents all kinds of styles and political views – from strictly official to oppositional, and different level of reliability,

For example, “**Rossijskaya Gazeta**” belongs to the Russian Government, and serves as an official distributor of documentation, it was established in 1990, has a circulation of 185000 copies and an Internet twin-edition<sup>18</sup>.

In 2016-2018, for example, RG published quite a number of brief articles dedicated to human trafficking, such as “**A Woman from Chelyabinsk was Punished for an Attempt to Sell a 13-years-old Girl**”<sup>19</sup>, dated 17 July 2018. The article was published under the standing head “incidents”, was quite short (121 words, 877 characters). The info was obtained from the Press Service of the Investigative Committee and contained the purpose of trafficking (sexual exploitation), the alleged “price” for the child, the simulation of the deal with the participation of officers as “potential buyers”, and the court decision. The language used was neutral. THB was framed in prosecution matters, no pictures were used to illustrate the case.

Another example of THB-related information published by RG on 30 March 2018, is an article named “**A Criminal Gang was Prosecuted in Perm Region for Trafficking in Young Women for Sexual Exploitation**”<sup>20</sup>. It appeared under the same standing head “incidents”, was also brief (169 words, 1334 characters), and consisted of the court decision, offenders’ modus operandi (fake job opportunities and deception in recruitment abroad), ways and means of enslavement. The information was provided by the Perm Regional Department of Interior mentioned as a source. The language, due to the official nature of information, was neutral, and the topic was framed in criminal justice matters/prosecution.

All other articles published by RG (“**A Foreigner Wanted for THB was Detained in Saint Petersburg**”<sup>21</sup>, 19 March 2018 (under 1 hundred words, 538 characters) sourced from Regional Mol Department; “**Two Residents of Udmurtiya were Deported from Bahrain for Complicity in THB**”<sup>22</sup>, 02.11.2017 (148 words, 1080 characters), sourced from Mol Press Service; “**Two Taganrog’s Residents were Detained for Having Trafficked their Fellow for Organ Removal**”<sup>23</sup>, 31.08.2017 (137 words, 1025

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<sup>17</sup><https://fom.ru/SMI-i-internet/14028> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>18</sup><https://rg.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>19</sup><https://rg.ru/2018/07/17/reg-urfo/cheliabinku-osudili-za-popytku-prodat-13-letniuiu-devochku.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>20</sup><https://rg.ru/2018/03/30/reg-pfo/v-permskom-krae-osudili-bandu-prodavavshuiu-devushek-v-seks-rabstvo.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>21</sup><https://rg.ru/2018/03/19/reg-szfo/v-peterburge-zaderzhali-inostranku-razyskivaemuiu-za-torgovliu-liudmi.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>22</sup><https://rg.ru/2017/11/02/reg-pfo/dvuh-zhitelnic-udmurtii-deportirovali-iz-bahrejna-za-torgovliu-liudmi.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>23</sup><https://rg.ru/2017/08/31/reg-urfo/zhiteli-taganroga-popytalis-prodat-znakomogo-na-organy.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

characters, information got from Press service of local Prosecutor's Office) and many similar publication were done in the same manner (neutral language, placed under the same standing head "incidents" and framed either as a matter of prosecution or criminal justice. All mention the role of the law enforcement in disclosing these cases, all written in neutral language and none go into the fate of the victims, if mentioned at all.

Information related to trafficking in other countries is placed under the standing head "in the world" with further details ("former USSR", "Europe", etc.), for example, "**Four Residents of Slovakia were Accused of Human Trafficking**"<sup>24</sup>, 16.02.2017 (91 words, 655 characters); or "**In China Police Arrested Nearly 160 Gangsters Guilty of Child Trafficking**"<sup>25</sup> (149 words, 1105 characters), 14.12.2016.). Other characteristics (the volume, the sources, the language used, the organizations mentioned, and the framing) are similar to those covering Russian internal trafficking.

"**Izvestiya**", established in March 1917, has been featured as a newspaper focusing on social and political matters, now belongs to National Media Group, irrespective of rather odd internal conflicts between its staff and recent owners, remains one of the most popular periodical, it has a 150000 copies circulation. It can be also reached on the Internet<sup>26</sup>.

The newspaper tends to publish semi-official articles with elements of analysis within a "polit-correct" approach. Such was, for example, an interview dated 24 May 2018 with the f. OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Madina Jarbussynova, who visited Russia for participating in the Saint-Petersburg World Economic Forum. The interview named "**25 Million Victims of Contemporary Slavery**"<sup>27</sup> (3032 words, 22493 characters) published under the standing head "slavery", "OSCE", "Europe" and "migration" contained the estimation of the scope of THB, major forms of THB-related exploitation (sexual and labour forms), child trafficking, a link between THB and terrorism, trafficking for exploitation in criminality, domestic servitude, and information about forthcoming training for the CIS countries (first time to be held in Russian). The length of the interview (1516 words, over 9000 characters) was sufficient to provide an objective and balanced picture of this criminal phenomenon. Since the interview was made Europe-wide in its scope, it was natural to address the issue of migration affecting the European countries as never before, as well as the influence of conflict situations increasing the vulnerability of population of affected areas. The substance of the interview was enriched by other related issues (such as the ILO statistics available, policy recommendations), the description of the role of Parliament, the opinion of other international organizations, such as the UN and the Council of Europe, the role of the OSCE and the significance of the CIS model legislation on countering human trafficking. The framing of the topic, due to the approach of the SR/CTHB to the issue, was multi-dimensional. The text was supplemented by a number of photos portraying miserable labour conditions in which trafficked persons are exploited, as well as photos of the SR/CTHB meeting Russian officials.

Along with articles having a strong international context, "**Izvestiya**" published a series of other articles dedicated to internal trafficking or trafficking for labour exploitation to Russia. Though one of articles, by its title, demonstrated the lack of understanding with regard to terminology defining

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<sup>24</sup> <https://rg.ru/2017/02/16/chetyreh-zhitelej-slovakii-obvinili-v-rabotorgovle.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>25</sup> <https://rg.ru/2016/12/14/policia-knr-arestovala-pochti-160-chlenov-bandy-torgovcev-detmi.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>26</sup> <https://iz.ru>

<sup>27</sup> <https://iz.ru/746825/aleksei-zabrodin/zhertvy-sovremennogo-rabstva-25-mln-chelovek> accessed on 15.05.2019.

various forms of enslavement in different countries and featuring how these forms differ from each other, **“A Slave till Death. How Serfdom is Organized in Modern Russia”**<sup>28</sup>, 26.01.2018. (2329 words, over 14000 characters), contrary to the title, the article can be considered as an example of good investigative journalism. It is dedicated to the enslavement of homeless people in so called “workers’ homes” – apartments or houses accommodating tens of homeless and addicted persons recruited by deception and fraud, not paid and poorly fed, and providing minimum 300% profit to their exploiters.

The article grew out of an intention to investigate how homeless survive in a big city and turned into a completely other topic, more related to organized crime and human rights violations. Even homeless people, those who have had experience of living in a “Workers’ home” and managed to get away, prefer to stay overnight outdoors rather than return to, as they said, “Katorga” (drudgery). Investigative journalists managed to identify and talk to recruiters (allegedly there are 1500 of them only in Moscow), get inside a “Workers’ home”, interview victims of labour exploitation, and screenshot pieces of chat of exploiters exchanging information about workers who either ran away or have to be “punished”.

The article goes under the standing head “Society” and is written in an objective manner and in a language sympathizing the victims. Law enforcement officials are mentioned in terms of their ignorant approach to the problem and arguments that the victims are socially neglected and marginalized, have deviant behavior, addictions and “do not deserve” their support and protection.

One more article worth mentioning reflects inter-relation between various forms of organized crime – fraud by so called “black realtors” (real estate dealers), trafficking in persons, labour exploitation similar to slavery, murders, etc. Its title is inclusive – **“Slaves’ Farm: the Investigative Committee Forwarded the Case of Black Realtors’ Gang to the Court”**<sup>29</sup>. (1543 words, over 10000 characters). Though based on an interview with an Investigative Committee official, the article is much broader than just an interview, and describes concrete cases of a series of crimes committed by this gang, including slave labour and coercion against the victims of real estate fraud. The language is descriptive and the article clearly shows the authors position, and is framed actually as a human rights matter. What goes against the rules of reporting in this case is the breach of confidentiality – the names and the photos of the victims are not changed, and this can theoretically pose a threat to their security.

In cases of trafficking in other countries, “Izvestiya” put articles under the standing head “the World”, as shown by an article **“The Body is Not Yours. How Ukrainian Girls Get into Sexual Slavery. The Impact of Free-visa Entry”**<sup>30</sup>, 05.09.2018 (1305 words, over 9000 characters). The article is based on interviews with Ukrainian victims of sexual exploitation abroad, and describes ways and means of recruitment, intensity of exploitation, and gives reasoning for the country having become one of the major source of trafficked persons exploited in Europe (the reasoning is true only partially. High numbers of identified victims and disclosed cases demonstrate not the scope of trafficking but rather the ability and political will of the police to eradicate human trafficking). The language of the article is descriptive though with elements of linguistic abuse related to prostitution as the area of exploitation. It is a case study framed in a variety of features: prostitution, security, immigration and human rights. Photos are much more related to those featuring prostitution. The names and photos

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<sup>28</sup> <https://iz.ru/700268/ivan-petrov/do-smerti-rab> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>29</sup> <https://iz.ru/news/656637> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>30</sup> <https://iz.ru/785311/igor-karmazin/ne-tvoe-telo-kak-ukrainki-popadaiut-v-seksualnoe-rabstvo> accessed on 15.05.2019.

are changed in this case and not associated with a concrete person. European Union is mentioned once in the context of visa free regime as a push-factor.

“**Noviye Izvestiya**”<sup>31</sup>, founded in October 1997 and quitting to publish its printed version in May 2016, remains a popular, socio-political daily newspaper focusing on most challenging social issues which many others prefer not to notice.

An example of its approach to THB can be reflecting by an article “**Modern Slavery. Who is to Blame and What to Do with It**”<sup>32</sup>, 31.07.2017. (642 words, close to 5000 characters) dedicated to the World Anti-Trafficking Day. The article, reacting to a wave of critique against naming Russia as a country having high level of THB (see the US TIP Report), reversed the audience to a monograph published in Russia in early Millennium and proving that slavery was there, in Russia, in its multiple forms. There happened no big changes since then. The interview conducted with one of the Russian and international experts on THB, a member of an NGO, provides advanced and clear answers to all these challenging questions: whether it is still a threat in the XXI century, where, in which regions and countries it is most widely spread, how many victims are suffering from THB, who is responsible and what are the underlying factors, and finally, how to move forward in striving to eradicate human trafficking. It is placed under the standing head “Society”, and covers, *i.a.*, legislation and policies, socio-economic issues and best practices. The language is positive (in terms of target-oriented analysis and call for action) and the interview is framed in human rights, security and socio-economic causes of THB. The interview is accompanied by a photo portraying a group of Roma engaged in begging and staying close to a church – and a blond threadbare child with them, very probably trafficked or kidnapped to get exploited in forced begging.

The scope of THB-related subject-matters in “Noviye Izvestiya” is quite large, for example, it published a short information “**A Moscowite was Arrested for Having Kept a Boy in Sexual Slavery for a Decade**”<sup>33</sup>, 10.07.2017. (151 words, over 1000 characters). The case study refers to information provided by the Investigative Committee and tells a story of a boy who was considered missing. The language of the article is neutral, it is placed under the head “incidents”, but it poses more questions than answers – why did it take 10 years to find a missing child, what kind of assistance has been provided, and many others. It is hard to say anything about the framing of the information, though it could have a clear human rights connotation.

An article related to alleged cases of forced labour amounting to slavery and exploitation of North Korean citizens in Russia “**A Bribed Slavery: Why North Korean Nationals Travel to Russia**”<sup>34</sup>, 2.07.2017., 3249 words, 36000 characters, presents a completely different approach to human trafficking and forced labour. An interviewed person, whose goal was to explain why the presence of North Korean workers in Russia and hard labour conditions that they were put into could not be equated with slavery (as pointed out in the US TIP Report), was an expert on North Korea, and his knowledge of THB appeared rather limited. The text itself proves that his arguments caused even more doubts and featured a situation of state-imposed labour under strict control of North Korean

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<sup>31</sup><https://newizv.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>32</sup><https://newizv.ru/news/society/31-07-2017/sovremennoe-rabstvo-kto-vinovat-i-chto-delat-9f024c99-cc6a-43b0-8fd9-5d9803256803> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>33</sup><https://newizv.ru/news/incident/10-07-2017/zhitel-moskvy-desyat-let-uderzhival-malchika-v-seks-rabstve> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>34</sup><https://newizv.ru/article/general/02-07-2017/rabstvo-za-vzyatku-zachem-grazhdane-kndr-edut-v-rossiyu> accessed on 15.05.2019.

officials, a system of fines and other forms of punishment, high sums of bribes to be paid in the country to get enrolled into brigades working abroad (leading to debt bondage at home), working overtime, discrimination in salaries (in comparison with Russian workers), and many other features pointing to severe violations of human rights and labour rights. The expert's opinion that their situation in the country of origin was much worse (as an attempt to justify these violations) actually nullified the pathos of the article. The article, as a case study (many cases!), was put under the standing head "Analysis", referred to Moscow Carnegie Foundation, and was associated more with policy rather than with the phenomenon. The language used was descriptive, and the article was framed in immigration more than in any other thematic frame.

The same aspect of alleged forced labour affecting North Korean workers was raised by "**Kommersant**"<sup>35</sup>, a daily newspaper founded in December 1989 and known for its balanced and serious approach to socio-political issues, on 27.06.2017. The article "**The State Department Rated Countries in Terms of Combating THB**"<sup>36</sup> (797 words, 5864 characters), placed under the standing head "World" and in a neutral language, described the substance of the US TIP Report that had categorized Russia into Tier 3, together with China, Belarus, Venezuela, Iran, Syria and some others, noting that the Russian government extended an agreement with North Korea regarding the provision of 20 thousand labour migrants to be kept and controlled by North Korean staff. The article is brief, 808 words, nearly 6000 characters, but informative and covering policy of the N.Korean Government. Its framing is complex, with emphasis on human rights, immigration, prosecution and politics.

A year later, on 22.07.2018, "**Kommersant**" published an article "**40 Million Slaves have been Counted Worldwide**"<sup>37</sup> (528 words, nearly 4000 characters), which stressed this same issue in a subtitle "Slavery mostly spread in North Korea". This conclusion is based on the estimation by Walk Free Foundation stating that North Korea, with the population of 25 million, coerced 2,64 million nationals into a situation of forced labour. The source of the article is a report published jointly by the ILO and the same well-known Australian NGO, in partnership with the IOM. It provides estimates of persons in forced labour situation globally based on official statistics from 167 countries and NGOs, as well as interviews with 71 thousand persons. Statistics included in the article is widely used by international organizations as the most recent trust-worthy estimation made possible due to a special mathematician model<sup>38</sup>. Again, the language of the article is quite neutral and the article's framing is complex, including human rights and policy.

23.07.2018 TV Channel **Russia-24**, in its Internet resource "**Vesti.Economica**"<sup>39</sup> (1144 words, 8367 characters) also drew the public attention to the estimates done by Walk Free Foundation and, along with figures of forced labour victims in various countries, starting with North Korea, and ratios of a number of victims to 1000 of population, published impressive photos illustrating some national context of the ten top countries affected by THB (but not at all related to any form of exploitation). The report is called "**Slavery in Today's World**".

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/daily> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3337290> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3693897> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>38</sup> Methodology. Global Estimates of Modern Slavery" Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. ILO, IOM, Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with IOM, 2017, Geneva,

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_586127.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_586127.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/104325?page=2> accessed on 15.05.2019.

**Rbc.ru (Ros.Business.Consulting)**<sup>40</sup>, a Russian media-holding, consisting of a TV channel, a newspaper, news agency and a magazine, covers THB-related issues, though more in its international dimension, quite often, providing world-wide figures (for example, an article of 10.08.2013, '**A Criminal Net of Traffickers was Disclosed in Europe**'<sup>41</sup> (168 words, 1276 characters) describing a joint operation conducted by French and Spanish police against a criminal gang based in China. Actually it was a mixed case of organization of illegal migration and human trafficking – some of irregular migrants who paid for their transportation to Europe, at a later stage got into the trap of forced labour). The article framed THB in the context of immigration and prosecution.

On 22.07.2018 **Rbc.ru** reacted to the report of Walk Free Foundation and published an article, under the standing head "Society", "**Experts Estimated the Amount of Slaves in Nowadays Russia**"<sup>42</sup> (398 words, 2990 characters) pointing to the economic sectors prone to trafficking: construction, agriculture, community services and commercial prostitution, as well as to the main countries of origin trafficked persons come from – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Vietnam, North Korea (up to 50 thousand workers), China, Ukraine, besides Russian nationals trafficked inside the country. The text was illustrated by a photo of a brick factory in Dagestan. Some sources alleged those North Korean workers were exploited at construction sites being built for the 2018 World Cup. The article also referred to the WFF report describing trafficking for sexual exploitation (the victims mainly coming from Nigeria, Vietnam, Ukraine, Moldova, Uzbekistan and other countries from Central Asia), and stressed that child sexual exploitation often facilitated through the Internet occurred in illegal brothels and hotels. **RBC** did not emphasize the human rights dimension of trafficking, neither framed it in immigration and prosecution. The estimates were multidimensional, and the framing reflected this approach. Other examples of **RBC** reporting on human trafficking provide just official information sourced from the law enforcement on instances of detention of suspects be it alleged trafficking for sexual exploitation (17.08.2017, "**A Man, at the Attempt to Sell Three Women, was Detained in Moscow**"<sup>43</sup> (222 words, 1594 characters) or other forms. Usually the language of such reports is neutral, and THB is framed as an issue of prosecution.

"**Novaya Gazeta**"<sup>44</sup> is a socio-political newspaper, founded in April 1993, and having strong oppositional content. One can find good examples of investigative journalism focusing on corruption, torture, organized crime, terrorism, elections and many other challenging issues.

As for THB-related subject-matters, it is worth to look at an article published on 19.08.2015 "**People are Booked Like Goods**"<sup>45</sup> (2072 words, 14467 characters) under the standing head "Society" (2031 words, over 14000 characters). Actually, it is an investigation of slave labour market, based on the evidence provided by NGO "Alternative", victims of labour exploitation and some offenders. The major part of the article consists of a story-telling made by Oleg Melnikov, the leader and founder of this particular and unique NGO, which got engaged in rescuing trafficked persons in 2011 and has become a stable and dedicated team offering the whole spectrum of assistance to the people liberated from slavery-like conditions. It is full of stories how people get trafficked, how they are recruited and deceived, how hard it is to escape. The article makes clear that the problem of THB, especially in Northern Caucasus, is neglected by local authorities, and "justified" by recruiters and

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/society/10/08/2013/57040da39a794761c0ce0938> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/society/22/07/2018/5b54b1a69a7947088b41311a> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/59957ee79a79474752e22997> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>44</sup> [www.novayagazeta.ru](http://www.novayagazeta.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2015/08/18/65276-171-lyudey-berut-pod-zakaz-187> accessed on 15.05.2019.

“owners” of enterprises using forced labour and stating that they are “providing people with job opportunities, with food and shelter”. Besides, the article contains case studies which say for themselves. The language is descriptive and contains commentaries, it refers to the statements made of governmental officials and NGOs, and it is framed in human rights, legislation and prosecution.

“**Komsomolskaya Pravda**”, a newspaper founded in March 1925, is a daily socio-political periodical, with, besides its printed version, is available on the Internet<sup>46</sup> has its own radio-channel and TV channel. Nation-wide, and having high circulation, it is considered by its critics a tabloid for the tendency to publish non-reliable information and use sensational language.

On 9 April 2019, the KP published an article “**Six Foreigners were Rescued from Sheep Farm in Chechnya**”<sup>47</sup> (437 words, over 4000 characters), under the standing head “incidents”. It is a story of 6 Uzbek workers who were exploited in a farm and were liberated by the farmer himself because he got scared by news in social Media describing him as an exploiter and decided to let people go for good. The article contains an opinion expressed by an NGO volunteer who assessed the whole situation as extremely risky. This was the case demonstrating how the breach of confidentiality and a premature reporting could put trafficked persons under a serious threat. A case study was done in a positive language, mentioned NGOs and THB was framed in human rights, security and immigration themes.

Another recent article in the KP, published on 7.05.2019., “**A One-legged Resident of Syzran Gave Money to a Beggar and Got into Slavery for 8 Months**”<sup>48</sup> (788 words, over 5000 characters), also under “incidents”, described a case study of a woman who was forced to beg by a Roma family. She was recruited by deception, driven away to another city, and robbed by them by taking away her social benefits of a disabled person. The woman was rescued by NGOs activists and assisted in safe return home. The article is written in a positive language and is quite informative in terms of activities undertaken by civil society organizations and volunteers. Pictures used do not hide the personality, and the name is real, and this is a point of concern to take into account with regard to the right of confidentiality. It is framed in (potential) prosecution and human rights.

“**Kolokol Rossii**”, a daily Internet-newspaper founded in 2015, having a strong religious background and features of nationalism vivid in articles on geo-politics, nevertheless addressed THB issues without sensationalism or anti-western connotations. One of such articles was enriched by interviews with NGOs and experts on the most challenging problems of THB for sexual and labour exploitation, forced begging and other forms bringing illicit profits to offenders. We refer to “**Contemporary Slavery: Cases, Traps and Price-lists**”<sup>49</sup>, 9.02.2018., (2762 words, over 18000 characters), which is actually a collection of interviews with the NGO “Alternative” activists and its leader. Its topics are directly related to the cases from “Alternative” everyday routine, participation of its volunteers in rescuing operation, stories of the victims assisted, and of personal engagement of the core staff of the NGO in combating THB. It is a combination of case studies and expert opinion on the legislation, written in a descriptive language under the standing head “Crime”. The article’s framing is complex, since it stresses the issues of human rights, security, immigration, and prosecution. One day earlier,

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.kp.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26964/4019141/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26974/4031990/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>49</sup> <http://kolokolrussia.ru/kriminal/sovremennoe-rabstvo-sudb-lovushki-rascenki> accessed on 15.05.2019.

on 8.02.2018, the same text was published by the Internet version of the TV Company “Tsargrad”<sup>50</sup>, positioning itself as “the first Russian TV Channel”, under the title “**What is the Cost of a Slave in Moscow**”<sup>51</sup>, though with an introductory subtitle “**Why Contemporary Anti-trafficking Activists Recommend to Refrain from Giving Money to Beggars**” (2803 words, 19187 characters).

“Snob”<sup>52</sup> magazine, founded in 2008 as a bimonthly, as much reliable as “Kommersant” and positioning itself as “a project for international community of successful professionals”, on 30 July 2018 published an interview with the leader of NGO “Alternative” Oleg Melnikov, covering a broad range of forms of THB in Russia, “**From Babies to Nigerian Prostitutes**”<sup>53</sup>. The interview (1420 words, around 9000 characters), is based on the practice of rescuing operations conducted by the NGO jointly with the law enforcement, be it to liberate Nigerian under-aged girls from illegal brothels or take away a baby exploited in forced begging by criminals not being in any relationship with the child. The interview written in positive language is based on concrete cases of enslavement and is worth reading in terms of raising awareness about the risks of THB, gravity of human rights violations, evolution of various forms of trafficking, abuse of IT by traffickers, forms of child trafficking, and the phenomenon as such threatening personal security not only of vulnerable groups but many others. It is positioned as “editorial material” and framed as human rights.

The same day, 30.07.2018 (International Day against Trafficking in Human Beings”, another article by “Snob”, similar to the one in “Kommersant”, reminded of estimates done in 2016 by the NGO Walk Free Foundation in their Report “Global Slavery Index” (later used by the ILO and IOM) “**What Do We Know About Modern Slaves? Infographics**”<sup>54</sup> (230 words, 1600 characters). In line with other publications based on the data provided by these organizations, “Snob” stressed a unique situation in North Korea, being both a country with the biggest rate of people in forced labour situation in comparison with the amount of population, and a country with the biggest number of victims of forced labour. The article contained rather rare and important information about the role of customers all over the world in buying products and services made by the victims of forced labour and thus contributing to modern slavery. Articles published by “Snob” on THB-related issues are usually well-grounded, based on evidence, and supported by experts’ and practitioners’ (NGOs) opinion. One of such articles was published on 2.06.2016 under the title “**Brother was Sold for 10 Thousand Rubbles**”<sup>55</sup> (2176 words, up to 15000 characters) (the article made a reference to the Global Slavery Index to put a concrete case into the world-wide context, while the national context is reflected in stories told by the former victims – ways and means they had got recruited, exploited and liberated ). The framing is complex for obvious reasons – it is about human rights, forced prostitution, and has no follow up in terms of prosecution.

NTV-Channel<sup>56</sup>, founded in 1993, quite popular one and having federal level audience, referred to the Global Slavery Index as well, on 22.07.2018, by publishing information “**Experts Have Counted the Amount of Slaves Worldwide**”<sup>57</sup> (226 words, 1582 characters) where indicated the estimation

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<sup>50</sup> [info@tsargrad.tv](mailto:info@tsargrad.tv) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>51</sup> [https://tsargrad.tv/articles/skolko-stoit-rab-v-moskve\\_109867](https://tsargrad.tv/articles/skolko-stoit-rab-v-moskve_109867) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.snob.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>53</sup> <https://snob.ru/entry/163911> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>54</sup> <https://snob.ru/entry/163916> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>55</sup> <https://snob.ru/selected/entry/109168> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.ntv.ru/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2050743/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

of persons -794000 - in slavery-like conditions or forced labour situation in Russia<sup>58</sup> under the standing head “News”. Taking into account that this report was a reflection of a widely-spread and recognized as a reliable source of information by major international organization, the language used by the NTV was neutral, balanced and covering the scope of the problem all over the world. The THB framing was complex, since the topic was addressed through estimates: the figures spoke for themselves.

“**Demoskop Weekly**”<sup>59</sup>, an online magazine issued in the CIS and Baltics every two weeks in Russian by Moscow Higher School of Economics, and providing analytical articles on politics, demography, migration, employment and other socio-political matters, also didn’t stay away from the THB problem. In April 2015 there appeared an article “**Decade of Slave Trade in Russia: Crime and Punishment**”<sup>60</sup>. (1005 words, 7257 characters). The article provided a detailed summary of a research made by a US scientist Loren McCarty who had analyzed over 5000 publications in the Russian Media and over 100 criminal cases having a single goal: to assess human trafficking in Russia and the efficiency of its legislation (since the introduction of 2 THB-related provisions in the Criminal Code in 2003). The results of her research were presented at the Moscow Higher School of Economics. Theoretical part of it (the description of the legal framework, *modus operandi* of offenders, including recruitment) was enriched by examples from the ground reflecting various cases of labour and sexual exploitation, vulnerable groups, child trafficking, and statistics available (though with no data concerning the number of victims – assisted and protected). What surprised the researcher was a low level of investigation and prosecution, and in her opinion the reasons for it were related to the existing system of reporting (it is better to have ten simple cases than one that is complicated, THB being the latter), and preferences of the police to deal with separate parts of THB continuum (such as document fraud, illegal migration, sexual violence and rape, illegal deprivation of liberty, violation of labour laws, etc.) as single, not related to THB, crimes which are easier to prove and collect evidence for the court. It explains why the official statistics on human trafficking cases remains so much limited. The THB framing in this case was multiple and containing the whole variety of its aspects (human rights, prosecution, forced prostitution, immigration, etc.). Certainly, the language of the article was neutral but it didn’t diminish the grave impression caused by concrete and rather tragic cases.

A few examples of Media coverage of THB-related issues at the local level. For example, a local on-line media “**Tchaikovskie Novosti**”<sup>61</sup> published a brief information “**Six Years of Prison Settlement for Human Trafficking**”<sup>62</sup> (156 words, over 1000 characters) sourced from the Investigative

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<sup>58</sup> A note of caution: this is not statistics. It is an estimation based on the ratio of victims of forced labour (etc...) and population (X:1000) and the opinion of the ILO, supported by the IOM, that such ratio for the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia is equal to 3,9:1000. NGO Walk Free Foundation believes that the same ratio for the Russian Federation is higher – 5,5:1000. For more details, see: Methodology. Global Estimates of Modern Slavery” Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. ILO, IOM, Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with IOM, 2017, Geneva, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_586127.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_586127.pdf) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2019/0813/index.php> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2015/0637/gazeta022.php> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>61</sup> [www.chaikovskie.ru](http://www.chaikovskie.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.chaikovskie.ru/novosti/all/9927/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

Committee in Perm and describing a court case of a resident of Cheljabinskaya oblast (region), a small city Tchaikovskiy, who created a criminal group for recruiting and trafficking young girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The group was active for over three years selling girls to Bahrain as if for “consummation”. The article was placed under the head of “News” and framed in prosecution. As it happens quite often (if not in the majority of examples), the article didn’t say a word about the fate of the victims and any assistance provided. The language of the information is neutral, and the photo illustrating the case was typical for stories covering court procedures (a hammer in the hand of a presumed judge).

A local newspaper “**Chelninskiye Izvestiya**”<sup>63</sup> (a city Naberezhniye Chelni in Tatarstan) published information from the court under the title “**Chelni: Chelni Resident Bought a Young Woman for Five Thousand Rubbles**”<sup>64</sup> (152 words, 1110 characters) placed under an unusual for this theme standing head “City and its residents”, 11.04.2019. Four years ago a young woman was deceived and recruited in another city for the purpose of sexual exploitation and sold in Naberezhniye Chelni to a couple who forced her into prostitution (the woman-trafficker died next year). There was no decision taken yet at the moment of the publication, but the two men (one who recruited the 19-year old girl and the other one who paid for her) were arrested and waiting for the end of the court procedure. The information was sourced from the local Department of Interior, the language was neutral, and, again, not a word uttered about the victim.

The same information was broadcasted by the local TV Channel “**Tatarstan24**”<sup>65</sup>, and, since the information came from an official source, there were no changes in the wording and the style of the report.

A local online newspaper “**Baikal24**”<sup>66</sup> reported about one of the most shocking criminal court case “**Court Decision is Taken in Russia on the Most Head-line Marking THB Case**”<sup>67</sup>, 26.04.2011, in which 11 accused belonged to an international organized criminal group – 5 Russian nationals, 4 Moldovans and 2 Israelis. The article (323 words, over 3000 characters) described that the group was engaged in trafficking for sexual exploitation, organization of illegal migration, document fraud, and the crimes were planned and committed in organized manner. The members of the group were sentenced to be confined to various terms of imprisonment, from 5 to 19 years. Other shocking figures were related to the number of identified victims (129 persons from Russia, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Ukraine), persons recognized as a joint party (83 persons from Israel, Uzbekistan and Belarus), and number of passports for travelling abroad stolen (2,500 documents). The information was provided by the Press Service of the Investigative Committee. Drawing from the official source, the language was neutral, the report mentioned various organizations which participated in the investigation and disclosure of the case, including Italian police, but no information on any assistance provided to the victims was there. The report was placed under the standing head “events”, with no photos.

“**Barnaul bez Formata**”<sup>68</sup>, a local online newspaper founded in 2008 and focused on events in the city of Barnaul and Altay region, published information related to the anti-trafficking legislation –

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<sup>63</sup> <http://chelny-izvest.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>64</sup> <http://chelny-izvest.ru/news/city/torgovlya-lyudmi-chelنينets-kupil-devushku-za-pyat-tysyach-rublej> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>65</sup> <http://tatarstan24.tv/news/tag/list/torgovlya-lyudmi> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>66</sup> <https://baikal24.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>67</sup> <https://baikal24.ru/text/26-04-2011/rossii/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>68</sup> <http://barnaul.bezformata.com/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

which by itself is a very rare topic for any local media – **“Punishment for Human Trafficking will Become More Severe”**<sup>69</sup> (168 words, 1339 characters). On 22.07.2015 there appeared an article about a legislative initiative by a State Duma parliamentarian who proposed changes to the current Criminal Code which would introduce the minimal level of punishment for the crime of slave labour, since the absence of such legal threshold made it possible for offenders to get away from the real and adequate punishment. Indeed, in many cases court decisions were ridiculous envisaging insignificant fines or a conditional sentence. Authors of this initiative, as stated by the newspaper (and its source, newspaper “Izvestiya”), believed that unpaid labour had become epidemic and required urgent legislative measures against traffickers and additional measures to provide support to the victims of slave trade, as well as prevention campaigns to decrease THB threats. As all kinds of official information on this issue, the language of the article was neutral, it was placed under the standing head of “major news”, was supplemented by a symbolic photo of hands in handcuffs. Unfortunately, the information, framed as an issue of prosecution, had no follow-up, and actually the legislative initiative appeared to remain an empty shot (as of 20 May 2019). No changes were introduced to the Criminal Code since then.

Another online source worth mentioning is an opposition leaflet published by the Russian Communist Party **“KPRF”**<sup>70</sup> (actually a reprint from the newspaper “Pravda” of the same date), which for quite a number of years ago addressed THB and forced labour. The article appeared on 3.10.2011 and was dedicated to modern slavery in Chechen Republic - **“Buchenwald in Caucasus. Memories of a Russian Guy about Chechen Slavery”**<sup>71</sup> (561 words, 3645 characters). It was a case story told by a former victim of forced labour – actually close to slavery. He was recruited on the Internet, together with a group of young men, and after two days of “normal work”, they all were instructed to bring their passports, since they were supposed to change the location and travel to some far away destination by bus. All of them fell asleep after having drunk a few sips of mineral water, and in a while they woke up in Chechen Republic. Passports were taken away; those who objected were heavily beaten and even injured with a gun. A few months later nine victims managed to escape and get back home, and the story telling ended with an appeal to the Russian authorities: “until when recruitment agencies in Moscow would remain registered and sell Russian guys and girls into slavery? Until when would it be possible to transport slaves and the law enforcement would keep a blind eye to the buses with sleeping Russian passengers and sleepless Chechen guards ...” The story told in a descriptive language ended up in pathetic tone (which had nevertheless no effect). The THB issue was framed in human rights more than in any other context.

Trafficking in Northern Caucasus was reported by **“Nasha Versiya”**<sup>72</sup>, an all-Russia newspaper of independent journalists’ investigations, in its regional edition **“Kavkaz-Versiya”** in an article **“How to**

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<sup>69</sup> <http://barnaul.bezformata.com/listnews/nakazanie-za-torgovlyu-lyudmi-uzhestochat/35669623/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>70</sup> [www.kprf.ru](http://www.kprf.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>71</sup> [https://kprf.ru/rus\\_soc/97322.html](https://kprf.ru/rus_soc/97322.html) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>72</sup> <https://versia.ru/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

**Avoid Getting into Slavery**<sup>73</sup> (913 words, 6517 characters) published under the standing head “Society” on 8.07.2017. It was also a story told by two former victims who had been recruited in Astrakhan, deprived of their documents, exploited in Chechen Republic at a cattle farm, and rescued by NGO “Alternative” a few months later. The article contains the entire mechanism of enslavement as explained by local experts and volunteers. The situation is more or less similar in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kalmykia, and Chechnya, where Russian nationals from all over the country get recruited to – all of them were looking for a job, got a fake offer and ended up in a situation of forced labour or servitude – poorly fed and not paid at all, often being afraid to run away because they were threatened and they believed that there was a real danger for their families at home. The language of the article is descriptive, emphasizing the role of NGOs and the need for the law enforcement to be more proactive.

An online Media “**Kavkazskiy Uzel**”<sup>74</sup>, founded in 2001 by civil society organization “Memorial”, focuses on events in the same region, but within a strong human rights approach. Its article of 22.06.2016 “**Slavery in Caucasus**”<sup>75</sup> (877 words, 6240 characters) presents a fundamental investigation of the problem, providing its historical background, practices of kidnapping and forced labour in Chechnya in the 90-s, current situation in Dagestan (a video-blog “Slavery of XXI century” screening a rescue operation undertaken by the law enforcement together with the NGO “Alternative”), case studies of recruitment, forced labour, coercion and severe punishments for any attempt to escape, and critical reporting on anti-trafficking measures taken by authorities in Dagestan and an opinion expressed by a Dagestan lawyer (“no slavery, just violations of labour law, such as non-payment”). THB framing in this case is human rights affiliated, showing multiple violations of the whole spectrum of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Situation in North Caucasus in the context of THB is reported more often than its scope in other regions of the country, it is addressed by all kinds of Media, including online and blogs, such as for example, “**YaPlakal**”<sup>76</sup>, an entertaining and collective web-portal and blog, founded in 2004. There appeared an article under the title “**Slave Trade in Independent Ichkeria. The Way It Was**”<sup>77</sup>, 7.12.2017 (1024 words, 7394 characters), actually an investigation of the evolution of human trafficking starting from 1992 and up to nowadays – costs depending on age, physical condition, gender, etc., slave markets, preorders of persons having concrete parameters (for example, a virgin blond, 17 years of age, height 170 cm, bust No.3 – such a person was kidnapped three weeks later following the pre-purchase order). The article described slaves’ living conditions, severe punishments, coercion, hard unpaid labour. Hundreds of slaves were exploited by terrorists as a human shield or victims for demining. 33 organized criminal groups were there to ensure unlimited flows of humans for various purposes, including sexual slavery and transnational trafficking to earn hard currency for terrorist groups. Comments to the article express concern about the current

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<sup>73</sup> <https://kavkaz.versia.ru/dva-beglyx-raba-iz-severnogo-kavkaza-rasskazali-pochemu-torgovat-lyudmi-vygodno> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>74</sup> <https://kavkaz-uzel.eu> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/251454/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>76</sup> <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/ЯПЛАКАРЬ> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.yaplakal.com/forum7/topic1704535.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

situation in comparison with early 90-s, saying that the same practice still exists in the region, probably with less intensity, but incidents are stonewalled by authorities.

The same region is covered by an online magazine and blog “**Shabdua**”<sup>78</sup>, founded in 2009 and having a strong religious connotation. On 29.02.2012 it published an article “**Russian Slaves in the Caucasus: Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Adygeja**”<sup>79</sup> (4979 words, 32259 characters). It is a story about Russians working in brick factories of Dagestan<sup>80</sup> - those coming from Stavropol, Ryazan, Voronezh, Lipetsk, Bryansk, Rostov, Volgograd, Saint-Petersburg, Samara and Moscow, as well Ukrainians and Belarusians. Many of them were kidnapped, others were deceived at recruitment. Sexual trafficking, THB for organ removal were also practiced, as stated by the magazine. Probably it is a rare example of a sensationalist language used to provoke hostility towards non-Slavic ethnic groups. THB framing is complex; it is a combination of human rights violations, prosecution, extreme nationalism, and an appeal to raise awareness among Russians to prevent them from getting into the trap of THB in Northern Caucasus.

A lot of case studies are published in **YouTube** video-blogs, some uploading documentaries, such as “**Rescued from Slavery. Stories of Liberation**”<sup>81</sup> (26 min.), published 17.04.2017, while others expressing bloggers’ opinion. The one mentioned described a case of 2 young girls, of 14 and 18 years of age, who had been kidnapped on their way home from a concert and kept in sexual slavery for 4 years by a man in Ryazan, another case of girls from Kazakhstan exploited in a shop in Moscow for 11 years, and a few others. The language of the documentary, especially the tone of commentaries accompanying each plot is sensational, supported by impressive interviews with former victims, stories of those who had been deliberately crippled to exploit them more in forced begging. THB framing was complex, reflecting its multiple forms (sexual and labour exploitation, forced begging, prosecution, and human rights).

A series of documentaries were dedicated to the same dramatic theme, also on YouTube. Those, for example, were: “**How People Get into Labour Slavery in Russia**”<sup>82</sup> (29.09.2016, 1,45 min.), “**The Slave is Mine**”<sup>83</sup> (20.06.2014, 21.34 min.), “**Labour Slaves are Trafficked to Dagestan from Central Russia**”<sup>84</sup> (20.03.2017, 2,01 min.), “**Contemporary Slaves**”<sup>85</sup> (22.11.2018, 57,44 min.), “**Twenty Years in Slavery**”<sup>86</sup> (3.06.2015, 48,40 min.), “**Slavery in Russia. Meeting a Slave on the Way to Saint Petersburg. Caucasus Hostage**”<sup>87</sup> (15.12.2018, 5,02 min.), and many others<sup>88</sup> done in the same

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<sup>78</sup> <https://shabdua.livejournal.com/profile> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>79</sup> <https://shabdua.livejournal.com/367873.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.3rm.info/13217-dagestanskoe-rabstvo-istoriya-odnogo.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1liZasGGBXM>, also broadcasted by the TV Channel “TV-Tse” (TBI) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ9S3gj7MGk> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QseS6Kkbl> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urq20B5nEDc> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NWcg1RISdI> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i40Kyi2mR7M> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>87</sup> <http://myvideo.cc/movies/NDhFOzdMa1I2dWw0VFFZa1QxdUhBRVRSWUhzaxoyOnE0YW1XSWNKWXI4RT0>

<sup>88</sup> For example, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yofhTEVNBeg&list=RDLUY5lXkWrws&index=3> – a documentary describing the situation at Dagestan brick factories (114.07.2014), accessed on 15.05.2019.

manner and describing the horrors of trafficking and exploitation. Each story is a human drama full of suffering, degrading treatment, injuries, humiliation, told by former victims of sexual and labour exploitation, and forced begging<sup>89</sup>. Many include plots showing the crucial role of NGOs in rescuing trafficked persons. Others are done by bloggers who have had their own experience of talking to former victims or personal participation in rescuing operation. The language used causes strong emotions and it is hard to follow the documentaries up to the end. Not that often bloggers publish stories more related to the historical dimension of slavery, but even those have an alarming conclusion: slavery and servitude can return to Russia (like the one published on 18.02.2013)<sup>90</sup>. THB framing indeed is complex, as the topic itself is.

Radio Channel “**Echo Moskvi**” known for its oppositional approach to political issues, addressed THB through a long interview “**Human Trafficking in the XXI Century**”<sup>91</sup> (22.10.2014, 3922 words, 27338 characters) with Susan Creston, an expert from Durban, South Africa, who provided a thorough analysis of the evolution of THB, a low probability of its decrease in the near future, of its forms, and socio-economic roots. When answering a traditional Media question related to state ratings, she noted that there are two approaches to compare a country with many others: one – to count the ratio of persons in forced labour situation (or trafficked out of the country) within 1000 inhabitants, and the other one- to assess an overall amount of trafficked persons, and depending on the amount of population these two figures will provide different result. Ms Creston quoted Global Slavery Index stating that Russia was placed as 49<sup>th</sup> in a list of 162 countries (number 1 being the worst). Actually the interview was targeted at awareness raising because Ms Creston explained the difference between THB and exploitation as such, as well as points of coincidence between THB and illegal migration and points that make these two crimes different, and she gave a good advice what an ordinary citizen could do to contribute to the eradication of trafficking by referring his/her concerns to a special NGO or to the police. The interview, under the standing head “With my own eyes” is conducted in positive and clear language, and frames THB as a human rights issue (though with elements of immigration and prosecution).

The same source, The Global Slavery Index, was quoted by the **5<sup>th</sup> TV Channel** (founded in 1938 in Saint-Petersburg) in its online version under the standing head “Tabloid”, in “**Slavery in the XXI Century: THB as a Profitable Business**”<sup>92</sup> (30.07.2017, 2061 words, 14558 characters). The article illustrated by a number of “sexy” photos portraying girls enticed in prostitution, provided a broad picture of THB for sexual exploitation worldwide. The article described the horrors of “sex camps” in South-Eastern Europe in early 90-s, methods of enslavement by “lover-boys”, fake recruitment and kidnapping, witchcraft methods in Africa, slave-markets in Syria and in other countries, auctions,

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<sup>89</sup> The overwhelming number of articles dedicated to the situation in Dagestan does not mean that other regions are less affected by THB for various forms of exploitation. It means that concentration of forced labour cases is high, and many complaints do come from Northern Caucasus. Cases reported in the Media prove that THB is widely spread all over Russia and criminals operate in big cities and in remote areas recruiting their victims and transporting them to the destinations of further exploitation, be it nationally or across the borders.

<sup>90</sup> <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/moborisov/1014610-echo/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>91</sup> <https://echo.msk.ru/programs/svoi-glaza/1422296-echo/> accessed on 15.05.2019

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.5-tv.ru/news/140651/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

sexual exploitation of boys, and child trafficking committed by their parents because of extreme poverty. But not only that. There were multiple examples of THB for labour exploitation in construction industry and agriculture, provided by the article, and figures of people who get missing every year – kidnapped into slavery. The article appeared to mark International Day against Human Trafficking, it was written more in sensational rather than any other style and referred to the wording used by traffickers and their victims. THB was framed mostly as forced prostitution.

**REN-TV**<sup>93</sup>, also quite a popular federal-wide TV Channel, founded in 1991, appeared to be more moderate in informing its audience about a THB case in Moscow<sup>94</sup>. The report **“THB Criminal Proceedings Starting in Moscow”** (73 words, 622 characters) was based on information from the Investigative Committee and concerned a Tajik woman who tried to sell two other young women, one from Belarus, and the other from Russia for the price of 100000 Rubbles. The criminal attempt failed because of proactive measures taken by the law enforcement. The language of the report was quite neutral, and THB was framed as a prosecution matter. Nothing was said about what happened to the victims afterwards.

**TV Channel “360 degrees”**, founded in 2003<sup>95</sup>, with a regional-wide broadcasting focused on Moscow and Moskovskaya oblast, produced an investigative report **“Modern Slavery: No Chains and No Handcuffs. A Story of Labour Slave Liberation”**<sup>96</sup> (05.02.2018, 561 words, 3736 characters) featuring the entire chain of THB continuum, from a vulnerable situation (in this case unemployment) to recruitment through deception, transportation to the destination, deprivation of identity documents, coercion, threats, violence, extremely hard living and working conditions, imposed addiction to alcohol instead of food, non-stop intimidation. The story is told by a former victim who got assistance from volunteers working with the NGO “Alternative”. The context of the report is much wider than a concrete case, it provides a description of various forms of exploitation, methods used by traffickers to keep their victims under control without “chains and handcuffs”, and proves that psychological pressure may be more effective than simple violence. THB is framed as a multifaceted phenomenon, and the violation of basic human rights becomes obvious even without mentioning. It is written in a neutral but quite convincing language, full of shocking details (for example, price-lists for various categories of victims depending on the form of exploitation and potential criminal income it may bring to the exploiter).

**OTR TV Channel**<sup>97</sup> (TV of Russian Society), founded in 2013 as a federal channel focusing on social matters, broadcasted a Roundtable (over 50 minutes of length) under the standing head “PravDa”

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<sup>93</sup> <http://ren.tv/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>94</sup> <http://ren.tv/novosti/2017-07-03/delo-o-torgovle-lyudmi-vozbudili-v-moskve> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>95</sup> <https://360tv.ru/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>96</sup> <https://360tv.ru/news/tekst/sovremennoe-rabstvo-eto-ne-tsepi-i-kandaly-istorija-spasenija-trudovogo-raba/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>97</sup> <https://otr-online.ru> accessed on 15.05.2019.

(Right!Yes?) on 21.01.2019 with a title “**Slavery in Today’s World. How It Happens and How to Eradicate It?**”<sup>98</sup> (8107 words, 53510 characters).

It provided one of the most comprehensive coverage of human trafficking as a complex socio-economic problem, a transnational crime leading to gross violations of human rights and integrally connected with many other forms of organized crime. To eradicate it, or even just to decrease it, as underlined by the participants of the Roundtable representing Russian civil society anti-trafficking organizations – “Alternative”, Charity Foundation Safe House, and Foundation “Migration XXI century”, and experts as well – requires a strong political will and a number of measures that would serve as a stable anti-trafficking infrastructure, that has been created in many other countries, including the CIS participating States, and is necessary to assess adequately the scope of the problem, to improve identification of victims and investigation of cases, increase professionalism of the police, judges and prosecutors, as well as engage many other stakeholders and first responders. The Roundtable participants pointed to the crucial role of the Media in awareness raising of the society-at-large and its vulnerable groups in particular, and the ability of the Media to bring the issue out of the shadow, to stimulate a so called “social mandate” that would be hard to ignore. THB framing was complex, with a strong human rights component and practical recommendations – actually similar to all those already made by major international organizations, Russian Civic Chamber, Russian Red Cross, CIS, and NGOs and expert community. The rich substance of the Roundtable was ensured not only by the choice of participants, each of them being a professional in countering THB, but also by the journalist convening the discussion - due to a thorough preparatory work and excellent knowledge of the issue.

**RTTV Channel**<sup>99</sup>, broadcasting in English since 2005 (and also in Russian since 2013), addressed THB issues on 8.07.2018 in its report “**Victims of Violence**”<sup>100</sup> (2030 words, 14076 characters) which was dedicated to a case of Nigerian young women (one of them was just 16 years of age) who had been trafficked to Russia for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In this case (and in many other similar cases) Nigerian traffickers used the World Cup Fan ID offering to buy it for the potential victims – not to enjoy sports, of course, but to get employed in Russia. The majority of the victims had no idea that it was completely illegal – these IDs gave no right for any employment. Others came to Russia with student visas. In other words, their stay in Russia was legal for the duration of their documents. A rescuing operation was conducted jointly by Moscow Criminal Police, NGO “Alternative” and the US NGO “Exodus Cry” after a long preparatory work which permitted to locate brothels in private apartments. There were few specific issues related to Nigerian and African VoTs who, in most cases, have no desire to return home. Some of them believe that they would be prosecuted or re-trafficked if they come back to their countries of origin – which partially may be true, especially if they were trafficked by their parents.

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<sup>98</sup> <https://otr-online.ru/programmy/prav-da/rabstvo-v-sovremennom-mire-kak-eto-proishodit-i-mozhno-li-ego-iskorenit-35316.html> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>99</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/about> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>100</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/nopolitics/article/537676-aktivisty-borba-seks-rabstvo> accessed on 15.05.2019.

Due to the specificities of RT Channel (aiming at advertising Russian reality abroad), the report<sup>101</sup> included an interview with the “Exodus Cry” US activist who was more concerned about prostitution in the US, and provided details how it is organized there, how many young girls inside the country get into prostitution at early age. Both parts of the report framed THB as prostitution pointing to the “preferences” of Nigerian victims to remain in the country of destination and readiness of just one or two of the girls rescued by the volunteers to co-operate with the police and provide evidence. It was sufficient for a criminal case to be opened, to detain pimps and Madame, and provide the victims with a status of a witness. The language of the report was neutral with sensational elements, but the victims were portrayed in a way that had no traces of sympathy.

Most part of THB-related information appears in the **Internet resources**, such as **Gazeta.ru**<sup>102</sup> (for example, an article **“In Moscow Police Detained a Suspect in Organ Trafficking”**<sup>103</sup>, 31.10.2016, 115 words, 919 characters), **Lenta.ru**<sup>104</sup> (**“Striving for Easy Money. Migrant Workers from Baltic States Looked for Employment in the West and Got into Slavery”**<sup>105</sup>, 24.09.2018, 1557 words, 11133 characters), **Meduza.io**<sup>106</sup> (**“Eighteen Thousand Rubbles for a Man: How Slavery is Organized in Russia”**<sup>107</sup>, 17.11.2016, 4354 words, 31048 characters), **Rambler.ru**<sup>108</sup> (**“Ombudsman in Primorje Is Unaware of Human Trafficking”**<sup>109</sup>, 126 words, 909 characters), and many others.

Taking into account the origin of this review affiliated with the CBSS project, it would be worth referring to the report **“Striving for Easy Money. Migrant Workers from Baltic States Looked for Employment in the West and Got into Slavery”**<sup>110</sup> that is relevant for the region and placed under the standing head “Former USSR”. The plot as such portrayed labour migrants as naive, who got into the trap of forced labour so easily because they did not bother to read the details of their contracts. The title itself shows a lot of disrespect by a stereotyping formula “Looking for Easy Money...”. A wrong approach drawing from an opinion that all trafficked persons who agreed to a work abroad, whatever it was, just wanted to earn big money (and do it fast!) was built on a complete ignorance of the vulnerability of labour migrants for whom migration meant no less than a survival strategy. The critical description of THB situation inside Baltic countries was based on the US TIP Report – this time (contrary to the attitude towards the Russian part of the same report) considered by Lenta.ru

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<sup>101</sup>Earlier, in February 2018 the RT Channel published a report about Nigerian trafficking to Russia (for more details see: <https://russian.rt.com/russia/article/480957-chm-po-futbolu-grozit-rossii-naplyvom-afrikanskih> accessed on 15.05.2019.) as a warning signal of a potential THB perspective increasing the flows of prostitutes due to the forthcoming World Cup and the demand factor.

<sup>102</sup> [www.gazeta.ru](http://www.gazeta.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>103</sup> [https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2016/10/31/n\\_9280193.shtml](https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2016/10/31/n_9280193.shtml) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>104</sup> [www.lenta.ru](http://www.lenta.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>105</sup> [https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/10/24/blanc\\_esclaves/](https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/10/24/blanc_esclaves/) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>106</sup> [www.meduza.io](http://www.meduza.io) (an Internet resource registered in Latvia by former Lenta.ru editor-in-chief, since 2014 working in Russian and English).

<sup>107</sup> <https://meduza.io/feature/2016/11/17/18-tysyach-rublej-za-cheloveka> accessed on 15.05.2019. The article is not considered here as a part of Russian Media, but it is still mentioned as an analytical report on THB for various forms of exploitation worth studying)

<sup>108</sup> [www.rambler.ru](http://www.rambler.ru) accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>109</sup> <https://news.rambler.ru/crime/36038009-primorskomu-ombudsmenu-nichego-ne-izvestno-o-torgovle-lyudmi-v-regione/> accessed on 15.05.2019.

<sup>110</sup> [https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/10/24/blanc\\_esclaves/](https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/10/24/blanc_esclaves/) accessed on 15.05.2019.

journalists as a valid and reliable source, and it left a biased impression. THB framing was more related to immigration and prosecution rather than to human rights.

At the same time the report mentioned above demonstrates excellent work done by the British and Latvian Police jointly investigating cases of labour exploitation of migrants coming from Baltic States and the access to justice for the workers who, in accordance with the court decision, got significant compensation from their employers. Taking into account the underlying root causes of THB in the Russian Federation (amount of vulnerable population, amount of irregular migrants, factor of supply and demand, shortages of the legislation, corruption, and absence of anti-trafficking infrastructure), the information published by **Rambler.ru** as a follow up to the concerns expressed by the OSCE SR/CTHB regarding the number of cases in the Russian Far East, speaks for itself: “As confirmed by the Ombudsman of Primorskiy Kray, within the last thirteen years of work of this state agency in the region there was not a single complaint related to THB”<sup>111</sup>. No cases – no framing.

Finally, it would be worth pointing to news agencies, how they frame THB. For example, a well-known agency **APN**<sup>112</sup> (**Agency of Political News**), in most cases having similar audience as the RT TV Channel, reported about “**Trafficking in Human Beings and Slavery in the Post-Soviet Area**”<sup>113</sup> (17.10.2015, 2203 words, 16686 characters), which actually demonstrated a combination of international estimates (including those published by Walk Free Foundation previously – we mention it because the figures of WFF estimates demonstrate an increasing trend one year after another), examples of THB situation in some of the CIS countries (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan) and in Russia, and a considerable number of cases told by former victims – how they were recruited, how they lived through the years of slavery, how they were rescued by the NGO “Alternative”. A sort of investigative journalism, the article concluded with author’s recommendations (not an often case, rather an exception) based on international experience.

**ASI (Agency of Social Information)**<sup>114</sup>, founded in 1994 as an independent non-commercial organization, distributed useful recommendations “**How to Help a Person Trafficked into Slavery**”<sup>115</sup> (20.03.2019, 1191 words, 8357 characters), elaborated by the Charity Foundation Safe House. Apparently, it is a set of simple but concrete and clear explanations, published under the head “Special Project”, of what has to be done by anyone capable of recognizing a case of trafficking, be a person exploited in forced begging, or a migrant. The recommendations presented in the form of an interview with Veronika Antimonik, who co-founded Safe House in 2009, are precluded by a well-grounded description of THB as a criminal continuum inevitably accompanied by gross human rights violations. THB is framed in human rights, more than in any other aspects of trafficking. ASI, in line with its mandate, published a few other THB-related articles, such as “30 July – **International Day against Trafficking in Human Beings**”<sup>116</sup> (30.07.2018, 551 words, 3708 characters) under the

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<sup>111</sup> [https://news.rambler.ru/crime/36038009/?utm\\_content=rnews&utm\\_medium=read\\_more&utm\\_source=copylink](https://news.rambler.ru/crime/36038009/?utm_content=rnews&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink) accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>112</sup> [www.apn.ru](http://www.apn.ru) accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.apn.ru/?newsid=34210> accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>114</sup> [www.asi-org](http://www.asi-org) accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.asi.org.ru/article/2019/03/20/instruksiya-rabstvo-pomoshh/> accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.asi.org.ru/news/2018/07/30/30iyulyavsemi/> accessed on 16 May 2019.

standing head “Human Rights”), “**Shelter for the Victims of Trafficking in Saint-Petersburg: First-ever in Russia**”<sup>117</sup> (8.06.2013, under “Regions”, 156 words, 1272 characters), “**Suspects Detained in Samara Region for Kidnapping a Disabled Wheel-Chair User**”<sup>118</sup> (17.05.2019, 279 words, 2101 characters, under “Persons with Disabilities”), and quite a number of others, mainly framed in human rights.

Certainly, examples provided in this review, due to its limited number, offer a partial picture of the Russian Media coverage of human trafficking. Nevertheless, they demonstrate a certain dynamics and lead to conclusions that can be developed further in the course of time. These conclusions were supported by interviews conducted with journalists who have had a long-standing experience in addressing THB – as authors, tutors, lecturers; Media expert’s renowned in Russia and abroad.

## Conclusion

Russian Media has had a two-decade experience of reporting on THB incidents and other manifestations of modern slavery, and comparing the approach followed by the Media in 2000-2010 and in the next decade could be useful for possible improvement.

For a start, it is worth reminding that the Russian Media “was faced” with the topic in 2002, at the presentation of the monograph “Human Trafficking. Socio-Criminological Analysis”<sup>119</sup> (in Russian) at the Moscow House of Journalists by Louise Shelley’s and Sally Stoecker who initiated this research done jointly by a group of Russian and US scientists supported by a US NGO - Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Centre. The presentation gave a start to a chain of publications and reports, the information presented by Russian and foreign experts created shocking impression and became a plot for scenarios of popular detective movies. The research was followed by Elena Tyuryukanova’s “Trafficking in Human Beings in the Russian Federation...”<sup>120</sup> in 2006. THB as a form of transnational crime got implanted into mass culture.

The next flow of interest to the topic was facilitated by the Media through a joint project implemented by the Faculty of Journalism (Moscow State University), Russian Union of Journalists and the OSCE in 2011 and aimed at awareness raising of young professionals – students and post-graduates of Media faculties. Workshops held in Moscow and in Sochi in the framework of Media Festivals and other mass events (starting from 2004), contributed to the attention of the population to the issue, and were followed by a series of publications.

Unfortunately, since 2012, *i.a.* due to the new legislation on NGOs, the Network against Transnational Crime and Corruption had to give in its activities in Russia. The discussion on issues related to trafficking in persons, especially women and children, shifted to the topic of labour migration. US TIP

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<sup>117</sup> <https://www.asi.org.ru/news/2013/06/18/pervy-j-v-rossii-priyut-dlya-postradavshih-ot-torgovli-lyud-mi-otkry-lysa-v-sankt-peterburge/> accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.asi.org.ru/tag/sovremennoe-rabstvo/> accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>119</sup> Торговля людьми. Социо-криминологический анализ, 2002, <http://lawlibrary.ru/izdanie45428.html> accessed on 16 May 2019.

<sup>120</sup> [https://www.un.org/ru/rights/trafficking/human\\_trafficking\\_russia.pdf](https://www.un.org/ru/rights/trafficking/human_trafficking_russia.pdf) accessed 11 May 2019.

reports, published annually, caused a wave of articles criticizing the US approach and the division of countries into four tiers depending on their efforts to eradicate THB. Hostility at the official level to the TIP Reports has become an element of an overall international tension and it, to some extent, explains the state's wide rejection of any critical assessment of the THB situation in Russia coming from whatever sources, including international organizations. Articles in the Media belonging to state agencies and remaining under State control clearly reflect this attitude.

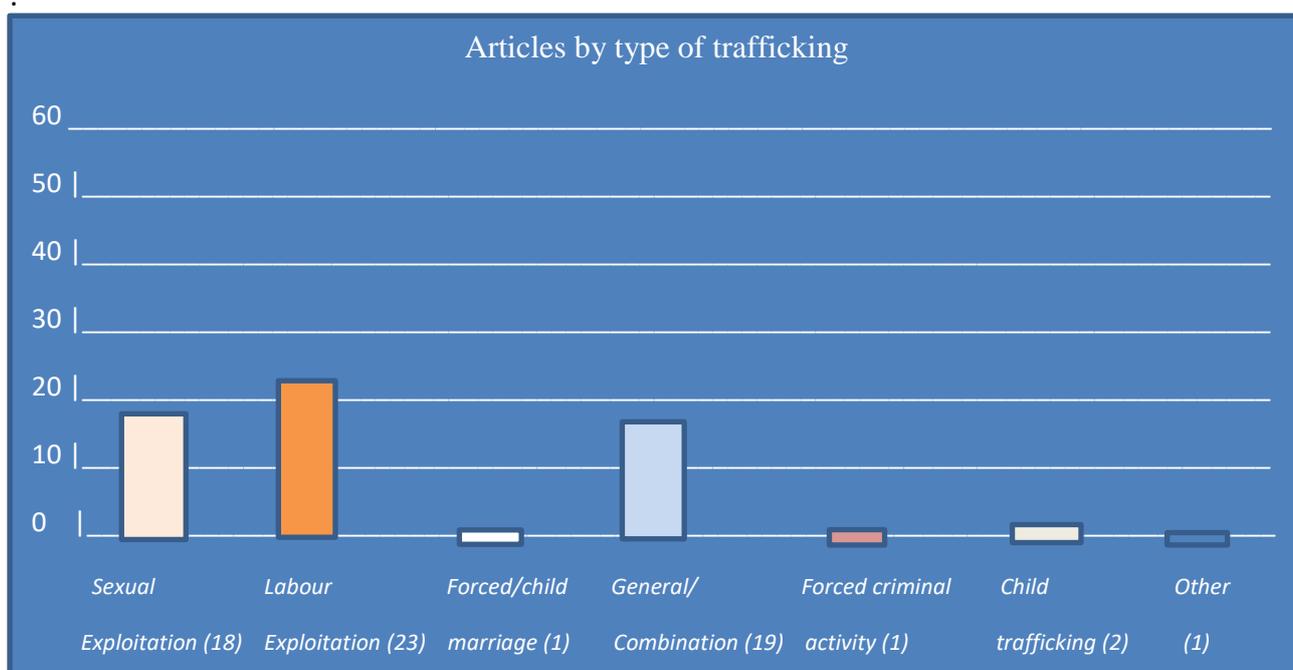
Media reviews undertaken in 2011 and 2012, also related to the research on labour migration, noted a low percentage of publications on human trafficking in the context of labour exploitation in Moscow and central Media (less than 10 %), in most cases they inform about disclosed criminal groups of traffickers somewhere in remote areas, led by members of local ethnic communities, and supported by corrupt policemen or migration service officials. Such publications are done in a typical format: an exploited person manages to escape from the criminal employer, calls the police, the employer is detained, the migrants – deported. No more, no less. A few serious plots on the TV and in the Media describing slave labour in popular shops and markets failed to lead to any anti-trafficking campaigns or investigation and prosecution.

Certainly, the overall picture is not just “black and white”. The difference in the approach of various Media depends not only on the scope of its distribution (federal vis-à-vis local), but also on the style (semiofficial vis-à-vis tabloids), its political partiality and format (printed Media, Internet resources, TV, Radio, news agencies). Tabloids tend to present the topic in a brutal light of extreme violence, underlying inhuman treatment, but often they remain short of a serious analytical background. In general, most texts look formal and, as a rule, not focused on the fate of victims after their liberation. There is a shortage of information about international initiatives or campaigns; those are more or less covered by specialized Media or Social news agencies. Regional and city level Media focus mainly on court cases.

It looks as if the Media and the Russian audience got used to trafficking, it has become an “ordinary crime”, and therefore the language of the reports has become more neutral than it happened to be in the first decade of the century.

Still, it is difficult to completely ignore the reality, and the Media has started to report about tragic accidents happening to labour migrants that are directly related to their slavery-like living and working conditions. In general, trafficking for labour exploitation has become more visible in the Media, reflecting its actual prevalence among many other forms of THB (sexual exploitation, forced begging, child trafficking, trafficking for exploitation in criminality, trafficking for exploitation by terrorist groups, trafficking for illegal organ removal). THB for sexual exploitation got a more noticeable transnational dimension (spreading of Nigerian forced prostitution, as well as voluntary, in Russia has become similar to the same phenomenon taking place in Europe). Relatively new forms of exploitation (in criminality, by terrorists, exploitation in testing drugs, exploitation of reproductive functions of women, forced labour in state institutions (in armed forces, in prisons) remain beyond Media's attention. They were not known in the first decade of the XXI century as well.

Less than one third of studied articles (18 out of 65) was related to THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In all cases those were examples of forced prostitution of trafficked women, in a few cases under-aged girls. Over a third (23 out of 65) was related to THB for labour exploitation close to slavery, while other articles of general nature (19 out of 65) also presented cases of forced labour and labour exploitation resulting from human trafficking. Forced marriage was a topic of 1 article. Also 1 article described a case of THB for exploitation in forced criminality, 2 articles were related to child trafficking and 1 article referred to THB for organ removal (other).



Most of the information was provided by profile NGOs (24), equally by law enforcement and International organizations (14 and 14), and the least by trafficked persons (13).

In terms of types of the Media, the most part of information was taken from printed and on-line newspapers (33), major digital media (10), TV channels (9), news agencies (5), magazines (4), blogs (3) and a radio-channel (1).

A positive finding that was made on the basis of the analysis of framing demonstrated an obvious understanding of the integral connection between human trafficking and gross human rights violations – more than half of articles (36) framed THB in “human rights”, the rest being divided between “criminal justice” (22), public policy, immigration, and prostitution.

The language used was descriptive and sympathetic in most cases, or neutral (especially in cases of information presented by the law enforcement, or statistics coming from International Organizations and being commented in the articles), and just a few articles (4) were written in sensational style (mainly about sexual exploitation).

The pictures were up to the point in most interviews or articles which can be considered as samples of investigative journalism. Brief pieces of information sourced from the law enforcement were published either without any pictures or with a symbolic photo of “a hammer in the hand of a judge” or something similar of a very general nature. Just a few pictures related to articles on THB for forced prostitution could be viewed as inappropriate and abusive.

A few words about investigative journalism. Media professionals were of an opinion that this genre was becoming less and less popular, the latest regulations making it nearly impossible, and many journalists preferred to avoid risks of getting into trouble, especially if certain plots included corruption and complicity of officials. Investigative reports of good quality on human trafficking have become an exception rather than a rule. Some of them are referred to in the review.

Media’s influence on the public awareness is not an easy question. Certainly, Media has sufficient resources to improve awareness of the society-at-large and it reaches out to the youth and other vulnerable groups through the Internet (though effectively competed by traffickers abusing the IT and making many steps ahead of the Media and the law enforcement in recruitment of the victims, in advertising their services to the clients, in communicating with each other, in money laundering, in blackmailing the victims, and so on). Furthermore, the Media is definitely capable to develop a climate of zero-tolerance towards exploitation and to promote a human rights approach at all stages of countering modern slavery – prevention, protection and prosecution, thus helping to consolidate the society against human trafficking. But it is not happening. A curious finding of this review is as follows: awareness-raising is not enough for creating a social call for eradication of modern slavery. Articles may be perfect in terms of a balanced and concrete description of the phenomenon, but they cause no reaction at the level of decision makers. The problem has not been recognized as one of the state’s priorities irrespective of the number of articles or TV coverage, of statistics provided by NGOs – much more numerous than statistics coming from the law enforcement, and the reasons for the people to take risky decisions in terms of employment due to desperate poverty and lack of opportunities, on one hand, and absence of social lifts, in the other, keep trafficking on the move.

The scope of the problem requires another, much higher, level of Media activities undertaken jointly with the civil society – be it initiated by both partners’ anti-trafficking campaigns at the federal level, or preventative projects developed together by the Media, civil society and private sector (even if just regularly covered by the Media), press conferences format that permits addressing relevant questions to officials of all levels and affiliations (government authorities and parliamentarians, candidates for elections at all levels, etc.)<sup>121</sup>. This kind of a direct contact and open dialogue in public could become more effective in stimulating attention of authorities to the THB-related problems. Authorities should get interested in joining such campaigns and in taking strong action against THB, but it is necessary to explain why and what the State and the society are losing by ignoring this problem (long-term economic losses in terms of taxes - not paid, money laundering and investment of criminal assets into organized crime, corruption, blows to the rule of law, no trust to the law

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<sup>121</sup> This format has never ever been used to draw the attention of authorities to the necessary to address THB.

enforcement and justice in general, image of the country at the international and even regional level (in the CIS, or other fora), inability to investigate fully other related crimes, such as illegal migration, document fraud, cyber-crimes, and conduct effectively financial investigations in general. Social Media could become a strong partner in the implementation of such joint projects (for example, change.org, etc.).

The same recommendation has to be made regarding the role of IT and other modern technologies, including the Internet, - as a part of the problem and a part of the solution. It is capable to become a more powerful tool in the prevention of human trafficking and in other anti-trafficking measures? For example, in the investigation of THB cases, tracking criminal financial transactions, taking action against sites and providers advertising services of trafficked persons, but this needs better cooperation with Internet providers and, in general, with the private Media sector. The engagement of IT-community in this regard could be crucial, and there are already a few positive examples of big Media corporations becoming powerful anti-trafficking partners.

An urgent need for an immediate reaction of State agencies to signals coming from the Media was underlined by President Putin at the recent Media forum of the All-Russia People's Front in Saint-Petersburg<sup>122</sup>, though on another matter, but the matter as such is less important than the principle: the Media and the society have to be heard by authorities. As of today, it seems missing. The number of articles proving the scope of THB in Russia, interviews with experts, evidence provided by profile NGOs, international estimates, case studies – all are there for the decision-makers to get concerned. The existence of other priorities – combating terrorism and illegal migration, eradication of corruption, protection of children's rights – is not an obstacle. Actually, many forms of organized crime – including those mentioned – are interrelated and keeping anti-trafficking file on the margins of the rest inevitably weakens efforts to create a safer environment for the Russian state and society. The Media is capable to improve the response to modern slavery – no less than other stakeholders - rather much more than others.

Yet this extremely high potential of the media is underutilized. Multiple reports and studies on the unique role of the media in the fight against THB prove that it can be accomplished in the most adequate way and within a human rights approach only if journalists themselves are fully aware of the scope and features of trafficking; only if they adhere to the protection of human rights of the victims and observe the confidentiality and “Do no harm” principles and refrain from sensationalism; only if they know how to treat the victims (especially children) in case they are to be interviewed; and only if they know all the basics of “DO's” and “DON'Ts” which are well grounded in the ethical principles of journalism.

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<sup>122</sup> <https://ria.ru/20190516/1553551479.html> accessed on 20 May 2019.

Various manuals, handbooks and guidelines contain lists of DOs and DON'Ts that are all based on the human rights approach and correspond to professional ethical codes but may differ in some details depending on specificities of the area and object of coverage. For example, the UN.GIFT Background Paper proposes the following list generally applicable to the work of journalists:

**“DOs:**

Tell the truth; Be accurate and objective and, above all, fair; Use masking techniques to avoid revealing the identities of the victims; The victims can do with some empathy from the journalists. Try to feel what they feel; Do not expose them but take up their cause; Delve on the reasons behind trafficking; Be investigative. Help track down perpetrators; Visit source areas and see the reality in all its complexity; Highlight the problems the survivors face, not their trauma; Cover the story at court - focusing on the law, its lacunae, its enforcement, delays, etc. Choose your words carefully.

**DON'Ts:**

When you want to do such a story - be a little more human; Do not treat the survivor as an object; Refrain from treating them as 'victims' as well; Try and avoid taking pictures of faces of the survivors; Try not to ask questions to victims that violate their dignity (How many times were you raped? How many clients a day?); Try not to take them (on a mental recap of their actual journey) to the brothel; Try not being patronizing, compassionate or even sympathetic; Do not distort facts to sensationalize even with blurbs, captions and visuals; Avoid tabloid-like, sensational headlines; Avoid an us-versus-them attitude; Be objective. There is no need for a trial by media”<sup>123</sup>.

Another excellent example of DO's and DON'T's contains in the **World Health Organization's “Ten Guiding Principles to the Ethical and Safe Conduct of Interviews with Women Who Have Been Trafficked”**<sup>124</sup>. These principles are:

- “1. Do no harm;
2. Know your subject and assess the risks;
3. Prepare referral information – do not make promises that you cannot fulfil;
4. Adequately select and prepare interpreters, and co-workers;
5. Ensure anonymity and confidentiality;
6. Get informed consent;
7. Listen to and respect each woman's assessment of her situation and risks to her safety;
8. Do not re-traumatize the woman;
9. Be prepared for emergency intervention and
10. Put information collected to good use”.

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<sup>123</sup> Abstracts from: <http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/en/media/guidelines.html> accessed 5 May 2017. Currently not available: [www.ungift.org](http://www.ungift.org) expired on 06/14/2017 and is pending renewal or deletion.

<sup>124</sup> [http://www.who.int/mip/2003/other\\_documents/en/Ethical\\_Safety-GWH.pdf](http://www.who.int/mip/2003/other_documents/en/Ethical_Safety-GWH.pdf) accessed 7 May 2017.

A clear human rights approach is mainstreamed in the **UNICEF Principles and Guidelines on Ethical Reporting on Children**<sup>125</sup>. This set of recommendations begins with a warning statement: “Reporting on children and young people has its special challenges. In some instances, the act of reporting on children places them or other children at risk of retribution or stigmatization”<sup>126</sup>. The purpose of this paper is to “help media to cover children in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. The guidelines are meant to support the best intentions of ethical reporters: serving the public interest the rights of children”.

**International Federation of Journalisms (IFJ)** also contributed to a better knowledge and practice by issuing a set of principles under **Children’s Rights and Professional Journalism Practice**<sup>127</sup>. This set of principles was reaffirmed by IFJ once again in **Guidelines on Children Reporting**<sup>128</sup>. **The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN.GIFT)** produced a few useful studies aiming to **educate journalists and improve the quality of reporting**: **The Role of the Media in Building Images**<sup>129</sup>, and **How to Cover Human Trafficking Stories**<sup>130</sup>.

To know more and to improve skills in this matter it would be useful to go through multiple analytical articles and informative reports reflecting the current engagement of the media in countering human trafficking in other countries, for example, a **Review of the Media Framing of Human Trafficking**<sup>131</sup> conducted in the framework of TRACE project (a two-year EU funded research project on human trafficking) and assessing the level of awareness and coverage of the issue in the United Kingdom, Cyprus and Poland covering the period of 2010-2014. The executive summary is of a interest because its conclusions can be applied, with no big adjustment, to nearly every country. Since human trafficking has been mostly framed as an issue of sexual exploitation, it is now a matter of concern, taking into account that THB for labour exploitation has become prevalent in many countries, and it is crucial to avoid a completely wrong approach on reporting it focusing mostly on illegal migration. The same can be said about other forms of THB-related exploitation, for example, for exploitation in criminal activities. Furthermore, according to the review, and similar to the situation in the Russian Media, “rarely in any of the three countries examined did the story or subsequent articles follow up on what happened to the victim nor was there much discussion of the fundamental rights that were violated or why THB is so prevalent”<sup>132</sup>. “Most reports failed to raise awareness of legislation”<sup>133</sup> (or the need to improve the existing legislation so that it could be more efficient in meeting the

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<sup>125</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_tools\\_guidelines.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html) accessed 3 May 2017.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> [http://elearning-events.dit.ie/unicef/html/unit2/2\\_1\\_9.htm](http://elearning-events.dit.ie/unicef/html/unit2/2_1_9.htm) accessed 7 May 2017.

<sup>128</sup> <http://ethicaljournalisminitiative.org/en/contents/ifj-guidelines-on-children-reporting> accessed 8 May 2017.

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/BP012TheRoleoftheMedia.pdf> accessed 5 May 2017.

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/en/media/guidelines.html> accessed 5 May 2017 ([www.ungift.org](http://www.ungift.org) expired on 06/14/2017 and is pending renewal or deletion). The publication is currently not available on the Internet.

<sup>131</sup> [http://data.trilateralresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TRACE\\_D1.2\\_Final.compressed.pdf](http://data.trilateralresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TRACE_D1.2_Final.compressed.pdf) accessed 4 May 2017; also see an article by Mary Borer at: Human Trafficking in the Media: Who, What, Where, and Why? <http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1215&context=honors> accessed 4 May 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p.37.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p.38.

contemporary challenges of THB), “or information about the philanthropic ways to help fight THB”<sup>134</sup>. It is clearly stated in the summary of the review that “attention should be given to making sure that the articles reflect the realities of the crime so as not to create false images of the victims and offenders, which in turn can have an impact on the level of support and the measures taken to fight THB”<sup>135</sup>. In more details these issues have been raised by the author in “**Reporting on Trafficking in Human Beings: Collection of Resources for Journalists**”, a review under the ICMPD Project “Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Organized Crime – Phase 2” funded by the European Commission and implemented by ICMPD in cooperation with FEI and FIIAPP, in 2017.

Indeed, Russia, as well as many other countries, has multiple contemporary challenges to meet that are related to organized crime in its various manifestation, and human trafficking is one of those – hidden and still under-recognized as a widely spread criminal phenomenon and a gross violation of human rights. It is the Media who is well equipped to open a new page in addressing modern slavery – in case there is a move from sporadic articles on individual cases towards a national anti-trafficking campaign that can have many formats, be sustainable and conducted jointly with its natural social partners. We are all beneficiaries – the State and the society – if this is the case.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.39.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.39.