

IMPACT:
Center against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict

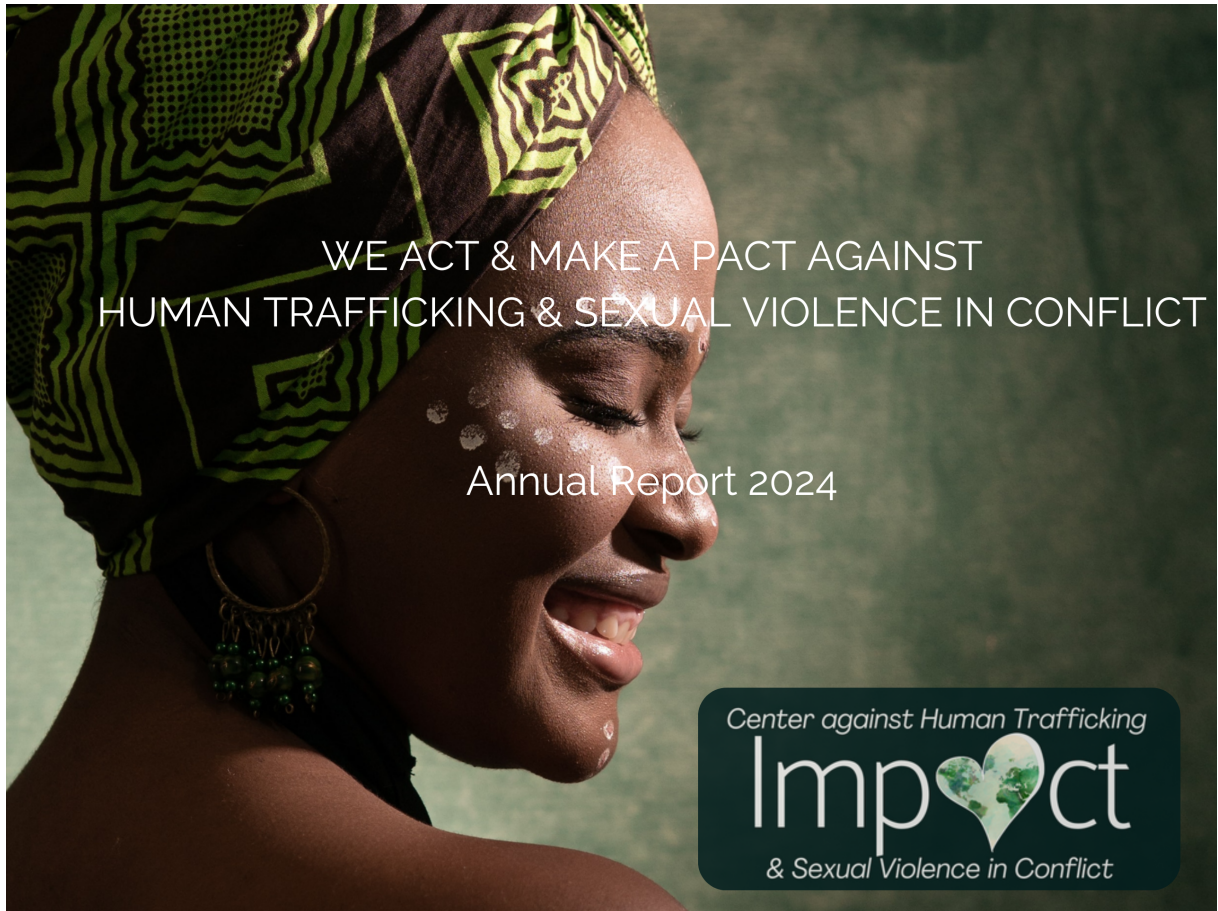


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Preface

2024 was a year of great impact in the field of trafficking in human beings (THB) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

In 2024 we invested in particular in education/awareness and research/advice by offering and developing further our Winter and Summer Schools on THB and CRSV and by distributing the results of our study on the nexus between both crimes through multiple fora.

We continued to publish our *Journal on Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, with a special issue on the nexus between trafficking, slavery and the slave trade, and to apply and look for funding possibilities and meaningful partnerships.

Finally, we put value in making an impact in the lives of survivors of CRSV and students directly, by making sure that part of our proceeds are also given to them.

Enjoy the read!

Best wishes,



Dr. Anne-Marie de Brouwer



Dr. Eefje de Volder

I Who we are

1. Impact's vision and mission

Since 2017 IMPACT: Center Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict works as an independent and trusted expertise center. Our vision is a world in which people live together respectfully and understand that we are dependent on each other to create a better world, a world free of violence. A world in which human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence no longer take place by addressing and looking at these crimes separately and in combination.

Our mission is to positively contribute (IMPACT) to preventing and addressing human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence, and therewith we play a part in advancing a world free of human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence.

We undertake this work based on a common passion for the topics human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence, a commitment to make a contribution to a better world where people have heart for each other.

IMPACT stands for making a positive contribution to preventing and addressing human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence. IMPACT is the criterion that we test against to decide whether the proposed activities matches the identity and core mission of IMPACT.

2. Impact's ambitions

In 2022, IMPACT's policy plan 2022-2025 was adopted by the board, which is therefore still applicable for 2024. It sets out the focus of IMPACT's work for a meaningful and unique contribution to the field.

Prioritisation of activities: in this period IMPACT focuses primarily on research and education, and secondarily on empowerment projects. Before starting new projects, IMPACT will check whether it can carry out a project based on the impact-criterion, its importance and how financially beneficial it is.

Systemic approach: IMPACT works from a systemic approach. IMPACT does so by:

- Increasing knowledge and creating awareness (being recognised and acknowledged as a centre of expertise on these themes after 5 years).
- Generating strategic impact (lobbying, adjusting legislation, etc).
- Contributing to improving the circumstances of victims/survivors and their families (effective access to facilities/rights), with an eye for a perpetrator perspective as well.

Geographic focus: although IMPACT has a global focus in its mission, in this period IMPACT focuses primarily on Europe and Africa.

Content focus: What makes IMPACT unique is the nexus between trafficking in human beings (THB) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (a niche within the field). For this period, in addition to the individual projects on THB or CRSV, IMPACT would like to focus on a number of areas in which IMPACT believes it can make a difference. In doing so, IMPACT focuses on systemic change (impact on multiple levels).

Focus areas: IMPACT focusses on the following areas:

- The nexus between THB and CRSV in the general sense (more attention for this in education and the public debate).
- The nexus between THB and CRSV in international crimes (enslavement/slave trade/forced marriage/sexual slavery).
- The nexus between THB, CRSV and terrorism ('sexual terrorism').
- Continued provision of expertise in dealing with the individual crimes, with specific attention to the role of victims/survivors, awareness and prevention.

3. IMPACT Team

In 2024, dr. mr. Anne-Marie de Brouwer and dr. mr. Eefje de Volder continued their work as Impact's co-directors. The board members of Impact - Alette Smeulders (Chair), Ingrid Straet (Secretary) and Suzanne Hoff (Treasurer) - also continued their work. In this year, Zsófia Bagó (intern) and Lia Kleuskens (consultant) worked with us on forced marriage and THB and the nexus between CRSV and THB.



Anne-Marie de Brouwer



Eefje de Volder



Alette Smeulers



Ingrid Straet



Suzanne Hoff

II What we have done

1. Increased focus on the nexus between THB and CRSV in education

We aim to have an increased focus on the nexus between THB and CRSV in education, with the following objectives:

- Identify what is currently available;
- Offer summer and winter schools for university students;
- Develop and offer education for high school students;
- Develop and offer e-learning for students and professionals;
- Develop courses as a fixed part of a university curriculum;
- Theme specific workshops with other NGOs for professionals;
- THB and CRSV related programs for study trips for foreign students.

In 2024, we noticed an increased interest in the nexus between THB and CRSV amongst students and professionals. We therefore taught - in addition to the individual crimes - about the nexus in our course offerings: during the Online Winter School in January 2024, our Online and in person Summer Schools in June-July 2024 (all in collaboration with Tilburg University), and the Summer School in person in Maastricht (in collaboration with Maastricht University). As of 2025, we will continue with one online Winter School and one in person Summer School in Tilburg (both in collaboration with Tilburg University) and one in person Summer School in Maastricht (in collaboration with Maastricht University).



In 2024, we explored options to start a capacity building program for lecturers in South Sudan. The idea being to develop and teach a course on the topic of CRSV and THB and their nexus that lecturers at Juba University can continue to teach to students and professionals in future years as they are confronted with these crimes on a daily basis.

In this year, we also started developing ideas around setting up a podcast (together with students from the Outreaching Honors Program of Tilburg University) on THB and CRSV for students by students, including by submitting funding proposals for this idea.

We, furthermore, on an invitational basis, provided guest lectures on one of the crimes.

We have come to realise that not all objectives mentioned above can realistically be achieved at once. In 2025, we will continue to offer (and update) our Winter and Summer Courses to students and professionals, whereby we aim to increase the number of participating students by reaching out to universities to incorporate our courses into their offerings. In addition, we will look into possibilities to expand on the development of a podcast series, which will also be used in teaching.

2. Clarifying the nexus between THB and CRSV in international criminal law

Objectives:

We aim to contribute to the clarification of the nexus between THB and CRSV in international criminal law by:

- Clarifying the legal definitions amongst others by large-scale (legal) research in which the definitions in international crimes are clarified, from a survivor centric approach (with elaboration of certain case studies);
- Ensuring that this clarification of legal definitions is translated into the national context.
- Recognising what has been done to victims (fair labelling);

- Developing empowerment projects for victims in the national context (in collaboration with local partners).

In 2024, we finalized a report commissioned by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramilla Patten, and her Team of Experts, on the Nexus between Human Trafficking and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), with a particular focus on Ukraine. This work significantly advanced the understanding of the link between trafficking in human beings and CRSV in international criminal law. The report clarified key legal definitions and their application in national criminal law, explored prosecutorial challenges and opportunities, and provided guidance on ensuring accurate legal classification when prosecuting these crimes at the national level.



The findings of the report were discussed during several events. First the preliminary findings of the research were presented during the conference “Combating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Normative Frameworks and Operational Action” in Nice (25-26 January 2024). After finalising the research, an online soft launch and validation session was held for Ukrainian professionals of the Ukrainian Sub-working group on trafficking (30 September 2024), followed by a physical launch during a side even of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) (14 October 2024) in Vienna. During a side event of the ICC Assembly of State Parties in The Hague called “*Enhancing our Understanding of the Nexus between the Crimes of Conflict-related Sexual Violence, Including Slavery, the Slave Trade and Trafficking in Persons*” we combined the findings of the nexus research with



the launch of the special issue on the *Nexus between the Crimes of Human Trafficking, Slavery and the Slave Trade* of our Journal on Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-related Sexual Violence (JHEC), which we realised in cooperation with guest editor Patricia Viseur Sellers (Special Advisor to the ICC on Slavery Crimes).

Another important contribution to clarifying the nexus between the two crimes was the preparation of a dedicated feature box on the subject for the 2024 U.S. Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

In 2025 we aim to continue to advance the awareness about the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence. One key initiative is to promote the implementation of the nexus report’s findings - particularly those focused on enhancing national prosecution and improving access to justice for victims - within the Netherlands. For this purpose, we have applied for EU funding, in cooperation with the T.M.C. Asser Institute.

3. Greater awareness and recognition of sexual terrorism as a separate phenomenon

We aim to have a greater awareness and recognition of sexual terrorism as a separate phenomenon, with the following objectives in mind:

- Research the nexus between human trafficking, CRSV and terrorism and its prosecution in the national context;
- Research the desirability of sexual terrorism as a separate crime (fair labelling) with specific case studies from a survivor centric approach;
- Develop an educational module on sexual terrorism (e-module or otherwise);
- Give training to professionals;
- Lobby activities in a national context;
- Develop empowerment projects for the victims of sexual terrorism in the national context (in cooperation with local partners).

In 2024 we contributed to raising more awareness on 'sexual terrorism' through a guest lecture in the Advanced Summer Programme: Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and the Rule of Law organised by the Asser Institute and the International Center for Counter Terrorism (ICCT) for professionals working in this field. In addition, we also gave a guest lecture on this topic for the Academic College of Tel Aviv-Yaffo. Finally, 'sexual terrorism' is also part of the discussion in our Winter and Summer Schools programs.



For our UN research on the nexus between THB and CRSV, 'sexual terrorism' was also part of the research; i.e. to what extent is legislation in place in the countries under research so that THB/CRSV as a tool to commit terrorism can be prosecuted as such.

In 2025, we aim to continue to raise awareness on this topic through teaching, but also endeavour to file for funding so that we can increase our activities with the above objectives in mind.

4. Provide expertise on combatting CRSV and THB separately, with a specific focus on the role of victims, awareness and prevention

Leverage our expertise on the individual crimes to strengthen our recognition and visibility as a center of expertise on the nexus between them:

- As a center of expertise, making a lasting contribution to tackling the individual crimes (advice, research);
- Focus on empowerment and advocacy activities for victims/survivors;
- Expand 3D project to other countries as well as other forms of sexual violence;
- Empowerment and advocacy at national and international level;
- Research and education on the separate crimes.

We contributed in several ways to tackling the individual crimes. One way has been through monitoring and evaluating the progress made on the commitments by stakeholders involved in the Platform for Action on the Promotion of the Rights and Wellbeing of Children Born of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (February 2024), on behalf of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) of the UK government.

Secondly, we conducted research for the TIP Office of the US State Department on the use of the right terminology to refer to persons who have experienced CRSV and/or THB (identity first vs. person-first language).

Furthermore, we advised the newly established office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Serbia on the methodology for their first report on human trafficking.

In addition, we conducted research - including desk research, interviews, and focus group discussion - with parents of children from at-risk groups to assess their awareness of online risks, how they stay informed and educate their children, and what challenges they continue to face. The findings will inform Terre des Hommes' campaign on online safety targeted at parents.

Moreover, we have initiated research on forced marriage as a form of human trafficking, following its inclusion in the new EU Recast Anti-Trafficking Directive.

Also, we contributed to understanding risks of trafficking for posted workers in the agriculture and manufacturing sector in the Netherlands in the context of the EU INFORIGHTS project, on behalf of La Strada International.

Finally, the HUU: project is still ongoing. The 3D platform offers a virtual reality with islands and stories of victims of CRSV. The partners involved are committed to finalise the platform in 2025. Musea have shown interest in using it as it is a less explicit way to give attention to a sensitive topic.

5. Making an IMPACT

What drives us to continue our work in combatting human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence, is the impact that we generate. As discussed in the above, we

have had impact in 2024 in several ways. We have witnessed the impact we generated through our research that has been picked up by policy makers, academics and others.

Being invited and recognized as members of an expert center on THB and CRSV and sharing our knowledge at high-level platforms, together with other experts, has also helped to move the discussion on topics such as THB, enslavement, CRSV, terrorism and its nexus further, for policy makers, students, professionals and the general public alike.

We continue to see the impact that our education has on students of our Winter and Summer Schools. Several of these students have adjusted their further studies to continue studying in the domain of international justice/victims' rights and needs/THB and conflict-related sexual violence, while others found internships and jobs in these fields. Where possible, we support them with recommendation letters and advice in furtherance of their future studies or job applications or even hiring them as interns ourselves. It is great to see that our goal of teaching the professionals of the future on the importance of tackling THB and CRSV, is becoming a reality.

Finally, by being part of several networks, such as SOM, La Strada International, CICC and the CRSV Network NL, we strive to work together with other professionals in this field and to amplify the voices of survivors.

6. In the news & publications

Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Special Issue: The Nexus between the Crimes of Human Trafficking, Slavery, and the Slave Trade (2024)(5)(1).

Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Regular Issue (2024)(5)(2).

Anne-Marie de Brouwer and Denise Mwenedata in the podcast *Terribly and Terrifyingly Normal* on the life of Mama Lambert (with hosts Alette Smeulders and Nicola Quaedvlieg (Spotify, 18 December 2024).

Anne-Marie de Brouwer, 'The Fight against Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Linked to Trafficking in Persons for Sexual Exploitation', in: Jean-Christophe Martin and Patrick Weil, *Combating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Normative Frameworks and Operational Action*, Université Côte d'Azur, pp. 143-155 (forthcoming, 2025).

Anne-Marie de Brouwer, 'Working with Victims/Survivors of Genocidal Sexual Violence in Rwanda: A Personal Journey', in: Maartje Weerdesteijn & Alette Smeulders

(eds), *The Emotions and Ethics of Focusing on Mass Atrocities: Perspectives from Researchers, Teachers and Practitioners* (forthcoming, 2026).

III Where we are going

Goals for 2025

Internal organizational issues:

- *Expand the number of co-workers, if funding allows*
- *Ensure a solid financial basis for the coming years*
- *Invest in applying for larger grants each year*
- *Develop new strategy plan for 2025-2030*

Communication:

- *Elaborate an effective and regular communication strategy via social media and our website*

Projects/content-related:

- *Invest in projects on sexual terrorism and the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence based on IMPACT's formulated objectives 2022-2025*
- *Focus on sustainability of educational programs, developing course offerings for professionals and capacity building on the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence for professionals*
- *Continue to invest in our visibility as a knowledge center, in content-related issues (e.g. our blogs, participation in articles, interviews for radio, newspapers and magazines)*
- *Invest in projects on sexual terrorism and the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence based on IMPACT's formulated objectives 2022-2025*
- *Work out the meaning of the 'impact-criterion'*

Annex: Financial Statement and Narrative

Financial Statement 2024		
	Costs (€)	Revenues (€)
Personnel Costs	109.166,64	
Financial Costs	520,71	
Office Costs	4.766,01	
Network and Professional Expenses	622,88	
IT-costs	1.147,90	
Accountant and Administration Costs	2.214,85	
Gifts and Donations	2.930,00	
Passing on Costs		497,40
Taxes	1.199,00	
Purchases Research and Advice	8.785,00	
Purchases Education and Awareness	1.024,00	
Revenues Research and Advice		48.008,19
Revenues Education and Awareness		57.775,64
Revenues Empowerment and Advocacy		11.378,52
Revenues Rent Office		1.500,00
Revenues Donations		11.071,63
TOTAL	132.376,99	130.231,38
<i>Balance</i>		-2.145,61

Financial narrative

In 2024, the personnel costs included such costs as salaries, holiday pay, pension, social security, travel, reimbursements for interns, and professional education and have remained similar to the year 2023. Other costs concerned financial costs, office costs, network and professional expenses (including such costs as subscriptions and networking activities), IT-costs, gifts and donations (see below for the amount set aside for our so-called ‘empowerment projects’), accountant and administration costs, and taxes. These costs remained quite similar in comparison with the previous year. In 2024 we, however, purchased more research and education by making, in particular, more use of a research consultant for a research project and guest lecturers for our Winter and Summer Schools, respectively.

In 2024, Impact’s revenues increased significantly for the pillar ‘Research and Advice’ and remained more or less similar for the pillars ‘Education and Awareness’ and ‘Empowerment and Advocacy’. More specifically, in 2024, the revenues Impact received for ‘Research and Advice’ related to the following projects: Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence; PSVI Platform for Action; Info Rights; TIP Language Assignment; TIP Special Interest Box; OSCE; and Terre des Hommes online sexual abuse. The revenues received for ‘Education and Awareness’ related to the annual Winter and Summer Schools on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking at Tilburg University; the Summer School at Maastricht University; ILAB for the Outreaching Honors Program of Tilburg University; guest lectures at different venues; a course on SGBV at Strathmore University; theses supervision at the University of Amsterdam; and the development of an educational platform with funding from the Snatager Foundation. Under the pillar ‘Empowerment and Advocacy’, the Dutch Strategic meeting on Human Trafficking (SOM) was again included. This year again some revenues were received for rent of the Impact office from Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee as they made use of part of the office. Revenues from donations increased significantly, in particular because of the generous donation of a funder.

At IMPACT, an amount of the result is set aside for ‘empowerment projects’ (€2.930 in 2024). Like in 2023, in 2024, Impact supported the Mukomeze Foundation with an ongoing contribution, in support of three Rwandan children who lost their mothers as a consequence of the genocidal sexual violence committed against them and one male survivor of genocidal sexual violence, in basic needs, education in university and/or setting up their own business. In addition, we supported a student to study at Tilburg University via the “Have a Seat” program.