

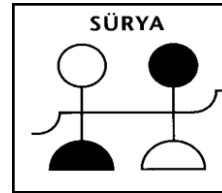
# The Need for a Victim-Centered Approach

Sally Beeckman, Coordinator Legal Unit  
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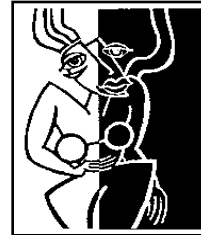


# 1. Assistance to victims of THB in Belgium

## 1. SÜRYA (Liège)



## 2. PAYOKE (Antwerp)



## 3. PAG-ASA (Brussels)



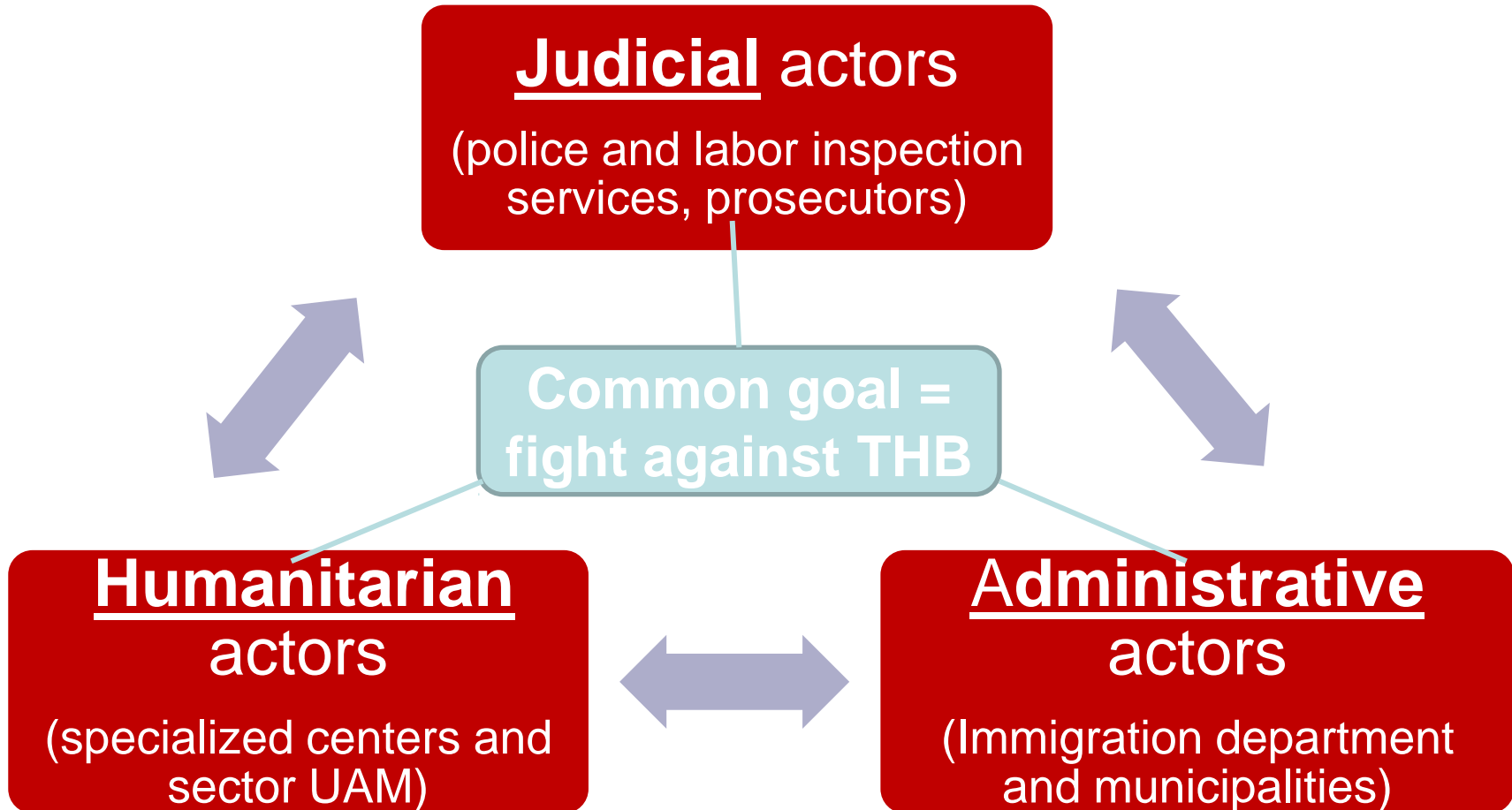
- Non-governmental organizations
- Mandated by the Government to assist victims of THB
- Recognized in legal and policy documents
- Core missions: \* assistance to victims of THB  
\* awareness raising and training

## 1. All victims of human trafficking ...

1. All sexes
2. All ages
3. All nationalities
4. All forms of exploitation

## 2. Victims of smuggling + aggravating circumstances

- ▶ ... who agree with the 3 conditions to enter the **victim assistance procedure** (exception: 45 days reflection period)



- Each actor = necessary link in the chain!
- Role and responsibilities = clearly described

## 2. Lessons Learned & Challenges

## 1. Detection, identification and referral of victims

- Clear **definition and indicators** of THB
- **Training & awareness raising** for first line officers and services = necessary
- Ensure that **information** is provided to presumed victims
  - Multilingual brochure
- Belgium: **limited number** of specialised NGOs

## 1. Detection, identification and referral of victims

### ➤ Challenges:

- be aware of possible **abuses** or manipulations of the victim assistance procedure
- more **proactive** training and awareness raising = important ↔ human resources



## 2. Multi-agency cooperation

- **Specialised** units – facilitates interpersonal relations and mutual trust
- Involvement of **all actors** at policy level and from the field – including:
  - labor exploitation: labor inspection and labor prosecutors
  - (unaccompanied) minors: juvenile magistrates
  - diplomatic domestic workers: protocol department and commission good practices
- Each actor has different perspective, mission and objective – **complementary** and with respect for professional confidentiality – in practice: sometimes **balancing exercise**

## 2. Multi-agency cooperation

### ➤ Challenges:

- **sustainable financial** and human **resources** → political commitment?!
- broad definition THB/ **labor exploitation** → in practice: **differences in interpretation** by labor prosecutors and judges

## 3. Assistance to victims

- Provided by 3 specialized **NGOs**
- **Emergency shelter** and **longer term** assistance  
(on psychosocial, legal and administrative level)
- Access to **residence** and **work permits**
- In case of **voluntary return**: attention to security and reintegration
- **Conditionality** of the victim assistance procedure  
→ Problem: victims who can not or do not want to cooperate

## 3. Assistance to victims

### ➤ Challenges:

- **access to justice** – more problematic since reform of legal aid system in September 2016: more strict income barriers and client contribution is due
- **access to effective compensation** – (organized) insolvency of convicted perpetrator
- more very **vulnerable victims** with additional problem (drug addiction, mental retardation, psychiatric problems, physical disability, ...) – need for more intensive assistance + temporary residence permit = obstacle for residential help tailored to specific needs
- victims **exploited in other European country** – no access to Belgian assistance procedure



**More information?**

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