

# Airlines to step up fight against human trafficking

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The new guidelines will include comprehensive checklists on how to identify suspected cases and handle victims after landing

Airlines are set to step up the fight against human trafficking, global industry body IATA said Monday as it released guidelines on how crews can act as "eyes and ears" to identify and report suspected cases.

Human trafficking is the world's fastest-growing criminal industry and the second-largest after the drug trade, according to the US State Department, and there is an increasing push for the [aviation industry](#) to take action.

"Many individual airlines are already involved and have launched anti-human trafficking initiatives," IATA's assistant director for external affairs Tim Colehan told reporters at the group's annual meeting in Sydney.

"But until recently there has been no industry-wide initiative."

Some 60 percent of human trafficking involves crossing an international border, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The new guidelines will include checklists on how to identify suspected cases and handle victims after landing.

"Cabin crew are in a unique position as they travel with passengers sometimes for many hours and are able to spot even the smallest signals and behaviours," the IATA said.

The approach also involves coordination with airports and [law enforcement agencies](#) such as border and customs agents.

Colehan added that while the extent of [human trafficking](#) within the aviation sector was not known, new and emerging legislation around the world required airlines to provide specific training to cabin crew.

The clear link between human traffic and international terrorism, according to recent research, meant that airlines' efforts to reduce the criminal activity could deter terrorism within the aviation industry, he

said.

The International Labour Organisation estimates that almost 25 million people are victims of modern slavery.

Types of [trafficking](#) activities that the guidelines identify include prostitution, child soldiers, organ removal, forced labour, debt bondage and forced marriage.

Key transregional flows include from sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East and western and southern Europe, and from South Asia to the Middle East and East Asia and the Pacific, according to UNODC.

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