

Modern Day Slavery?

Associate Professor of Law Karen Bravo discusses modern trafficking in humans.

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Transcript

[K. Bravo] Even trafficking can sometimes be difficult to discern. We have two legal documents or main legal documents addressing this issue. We have the International Convention, we have the U.N. protocol against the trafficking in human beings especially in women and children, as well as the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. And the essence of the definitions of human trafficking include the transportation, transfer, harboring of a person for purposes of exploitation.

And human trafficking is often referred to as modern-day slavery, a modern form of slavery, and it's not just called slavery because when you look at previous forms of slavery, slavery was legal within those regimes. I have an article published exploring the analogy between modern trafficking in humans and the transatlantic slave trade, and I ask if we use the analogy, if we compare human trafficking to slavery, to the transatlantic slave trade is that analysis a valid one? Is that analogy a valid one? So I looked at the ways in which the legal regimes are very different and what is the affect of using that language in our anti-trafficking discourse.

In 1999 the CIA issued a report in which it estimated that human trafficking was the third largest illicit market in the world following behind drugs and arms smuggling. In that same report estimates were made that coming into the U.S. 50,000 individuals were trafficked in to the U.S. annually. Now, subsequently as the state department has investigated this problem they have decreased their estimate to 17,500 annually in the latest report.