

Season of Creation 2025

Peace with Creation



Human Trafficking and the Climate Crisis

A Reflection from the Brazilian Amazon

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In Brazil, the **Um Grito pela Vida network**, supported by the Conference of Religious of Brazil (CRB), joins efforts with Talitha Kum, International Network of Consecrated Life Against Human Trafficking, in the Season of Creation 2025 social advocacy campaign against human trafficking, and reaffirms that this is a time to stand for “Peace with Creation.”

Combating human trafficking is an act of care for our Common Home, the sacred space of Creation, which is increasingly under attack and destruction by an irresponsible system that exploits all forms of life. The climate crisis has triggered thousands of forced displacements worldwide, significantly increasing the vulnerability of individuals, communities, and entire territories to trafficking. In turn, **environmental decline destroys traditional livelihoods such as farming and fishing**, plunging people into poverty and unemployment—conditions that make them susceptible to false promises from traffickers who offer seemingly legitimate work and improved living conditions.



Across the Brazilian Amazon, **over 80,000 mining sites are taking over the land**, fueling deforestation and the climate crisis. Access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and protection is often compromised, hindering both the prevention of trafficking and the safeguarding of potential victims.

As **Pope Francis** warned in *Laudato Si'* (2015):

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.”

His message highlights the **urgent need for integral ecology**, linking environmental and social justice, and critiques an exploitative economic system driven by unchecked consumerism, even at the cost of commodifying human lives for profit.



Addressing human trafficking¹ in contexts of environmental degradation, such as the Amazon, requires **preventive strategies** that consider environmental risks—such as providing anti-trafficking information to displaced populations, promoting sustainable development and community resilience, and implementing public policies that integrate anti-trafficking efforts with climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. These actions must reflect **the interconnection between environmental destruction and human exploitation**.

¹ A research by the Federal University of Roraima identified 309 people who were victims of human trafficking between 2022 and 2024: <http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/2543901712551658>

The climate emergency exacerbates socioeconomic vulnerabilities such as extreme poverty and lack of opportunity to find a better job, forcing individuals into exploitative, unsafe, and degrading work including illegal resource extraction and other **environmental crimes**, simply to survive and support their families. In the pursuit of survival, individuals may become involved in **illegal mining operations**, which are both environmentally destructive and hazardous to human health. Others may be drawn into illicit logging/timber harvesting activities, often in remote areas, where labor conditions are analogous with modern-day slavery. People in precarious situations may also be recruited into **illegal deforestation**, **wildlife trafficking**, and unsafe waste disposal practices due to a lack of legal employment options.

It is crucial to recognize that **this reality is not a matter of choice**, but rather a consequence of systemic inequality and deprivation of basic conditions. Combating vulnerability and promoting dignified work is an urgent humanitarian imperative.

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