

ISIS paying human smugglers for recruiting child refugees: UK report

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London: The dreaded terror group Islamic State (ISIS) are paying human traffickers fees for recruiting child refugees from countries like Lebanon and Jordan, a new UK report has warned.

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The report from counter-terrorism think-tank Quilliam to be released on Monday claims that an estimated 88,300 unaccompanied children identified by the European Unions police agency Europol as having gone missing are at risk of being radicalised.

"Young asylum seekers are targeted by extremist groups as they are more vulnerable to indoctrination, make able fighters and, in the case of girls, can create a new generation of recruits. This report outlines national and international requirements to reduce the risk of child-trafficking, extremism and modern slavery," Nikita Malik, a senior researcher at Quilliam, told the Observer newspaper.

The report found that ISIS had offered up to 2,000 dollars to recruit within camps in Lebanon and Jordan.

Last year, Jordanian special forces reportedly found what they described as an ISIS sleeper cell inside a refugee camp near Irbid, north Jordan.

Additional reports indicated that ISIS had tried to recruit refugees by supplying food previously withheld from camp residents, the newspaper reports.

The report said: "Young unaccompanied refugees are more vulnerable to radicalisation if they are separated from their parents, who remained in the country of origin at risk to violent and radical groups, or in a new host country".

"There is no question that militant groups target refugee youth for recruitment. It has also been argued that refugee youth can become autonomously radicalised, through online content, for example," the report said.

Another so-called hotspot is the south Libyan town of Qatrun, where reports have indicated that ISIS, which is believed to have between 4,000 to 6,000 fighters in the region, has waived 450-pound smuggler fees to allow refugees to travel north if they joined its ranks.

The 171-page report proposes the creation of a safeguarding and resilience against extremism framework, which would be mandatory for organisations such as the UK's Home Office and the National Crime Agency.

- (With inputs from PTI)