

The refugees are often without money and unable to speak the local language, leaving them even more vulnerable to exploitation from human traffickers, who ruthlessly prey upon the weak and unprotected.

State Department Principal Deputy Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Dr. Kari Johnstone has been ringing the alarm bells since the Feb. 24 invasion began, warning it has put “millions of refugees and displaced persons at high risk of human trafficking.” Rooting out the bad guys is extraordinarily difficult because the traffickers often disguise themselves as “volunteers” offering to help the victims with transportation, food or shelter.

Even before Russia began raining down hell on Ukrainian civilians, the U.S. worked with Ukraine and the European Union to enhance anti-trafficking measures, including information campaigns to warn about the dangers of human trafficking.

Human traffickers rely on the internet for profit. And the proliferation of smartphones has proven to be a force multiplier for human exploitation.