Defender of rights calls for better protection of minors who are victims of human trafficking

The French Defender of Rights (*Défenseur des droits*) published a report in July 2026, calling for better identification and procedures for minors who are victims of human trafficking.

This report looks at the shortcomings of the French system in identifying, protecting and providing support to minors who are victims or presumed victims of trafficking, in particular unaccompanied minors.

It analyses real-life cases to highlight shortcomings on the part of the referring agencies, child welfare services (ASE) and the justice system and sets out a number of recommendations to ensure that human trafficking is better addressed by the various stakeholders within the public justice system.

The Defender makes several recommendations in the report, namely:

- establishing a central office dedicated to the trafficking of minors and implementing a mechanism for identifying and protecting victims
- enshrining the principle of presumption of being a victim of trafficking in human beings when a minor shows a set of indicators
- creating a sufficient number of care places for minor victims or presumed victims
- adapting the legal framework to ensure specific procedural safeguards

Amongst the recommendations, the Defender asks national authorities to systematically take into account trafficking indicators and to refrain from placing minors in detention, including in transit zones at borders.

Source(s)

- Government | Gouvernement (20 July, 2026), Mieux protéger les mineurs victimes de traite des êtres humains, les recommandations de la Défenseure des droits [Better protection of minors who are victims of human trafficking, recommendations from the Defender of rights], https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/mieux-proteger-les-mineurs-victimes-de-traite-des-etres-humains-les-recommandations-de-la

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For more information, please contact: ias@euaa.europa.eu

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