

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Executive Director Yury Fedotov
Statement on the World Day against Trafficking in Persons - 30 July 2015

Many millions of vulnerable women, men and children are being cruelly exploited – coerced into working in factories, fields and brothels or begging on the street; pushed into armed combat or forced marriages; trafficked so their organs can be harvested and sold.

We are living in an era of many crises and troubles, as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned. Record numbers of people are fleeing war and persecution, and the international community is grappling with acute migration challenges in the Mediterranean, the Balkans, in the Andaman Sea, Latin America and Africa.

For human traffickers, these hardships represent business opportunities.

The world is facing many grave challenges, and our resources are strained. But we cannot allow unscrupulous criminals to exploit these crises and take advantage of desperation and suffering.

No place in the world is safe: the latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that the trafficking victims identified in 124 states were citizens of 152 different countries.

More and more detected victims of trafficking are children, especially girls under the age of 18.

Over the past decade there has been no significant improvement in the overall criminal justice response to this crime. In the period covered by the Global Report, some 40 per cent of countries reported less than ten convictions per year. Some 15 per cent did not record a single conviction.

This illustrates a level of impunity which is unacceptable and highlights the fact that, at the moment, the traffickers are getting away with their crimes.

30 July is United Nations World Day against Trafficking in Persons, established to raise awareness of the plight of human trafficking victims, and promote and protect their rights.

Let us take this opportunity to give hope to trafficking victims, pledge to do our part and help end this terrible crime.

The first step to taking action is taking this crime seriously.

Governments must ratify and effectively implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol on trafficking, to protect trafficking victims, promote cooperation between countries and ensure that criminal traffickers, wherever they are, are brought to justice.

I encourage everyone to educate themselves and help others become aware of the problem.

As consumers, employees and business owners, ordinary citizens can advocate for measures to prevent the use of forced labour in operations and supply chains, and eliminate abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices that may lead to trafficking.

Finally, I urge governments, companies and individuals to support the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons: www.unodc.org/humantraffickingfund.

Financed solely through voluntary contributions, the Trust Fund works with NGO partners across the globe to identify women, children and men who have been exploited by traffickers, and give them the assistance, protection and support they need.

Since 2011, the Trust Fund has helped some 2,000 victims annually, providing shelter, basic health services, vocational training and schooling, as well as psychosocial, legal and economic support.

Join the #igivehope campaign today and show your solidarity with victims of human trafficking:
www.unodc.org/endht.

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