

29.07.16 - Interview with UNODC Goodwill Ambassador Ozark Henry for World Day against Trafficking in Persons



Ozark Henry as Goodwill Ambassador. Photo: UNODC

The focus for [World Day against Trafficking in Persons](#) this year is 'Vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons', could you please elaborate on this?

The exploitation of people's vulnerability is at the core of trafficking in persons. This third World Day against Trafficking in persons focuses exactly on that and on the need to prevent people becoming victims through gathering and spreading information about the practices used by traffickers; while at the same time properly identifying victims, establishing new trust, empowering them and restoring their rights.

Nowadays and in the global context of mixed migration flows and the large scale movement of refugees and migrants, there are multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities.

Men, women and children; migrants, asylum seekers and stateless persons; persons with disabilities, street children or those in institutional care; people on the move and those who are left behind - no region or country is untouched by trafficking in persons, whether for sexual exploitation, forced labour or a host of exploitative practices.

Traffickers continue to deceive and control victims, by new and old forms, but the underlying challenge for us remains the same: we need to redouble our efforts to identify and protect victims as well as to disrupt the criminal networks who commit these crimes.

As [UNODC Goodwill Ambassador](#) , can you explain how UNODC's related work and more precisely, the Blue Heart campaign, addresses these vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons?

The Blue Heart represents the sadness of those who are trafficked while reminding us of the cold-heartedness of those who buy and sell fellow human beings. The use of the blue UN colour also demonstrates the commitment of the United Nations to combating this crime against human dignity.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about trafficking in persons and to show solidarity with the victims of trafficking. It also seeks to encourage involvement and inspire action at all levels to help stop this crime.

We want to create an international, visible symbol to make sure the third most lucrative crime in the world can be brought out of the shadows. By "wearing" the Blue Heart you will raise awareness of trafficking and join the campaign to fight this crime.

Several countries around the world have joined the campaign to encourage involvement and inspire action to combat trafficking thus increasing the knowledge about the crime to help prevent it.

The campaign also raises awareness about the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking. The Trust Fund provides the opportunity for all people including

governments, the private sector, international organizations, NGOs and individuals to work together to directly help those most affected by this scourge across the globe.

Through its Small Grants Facility, the Trust Fund awards multi-year grants of up to US\$ 20,000 per year to grassroots non-governmental organizations that directly assist victims of human trafficking in countries around the world.

Since its launch, the Trust Fund has supported direct assistance to nearly 2,000 individuals every year and tens of thousands have been indirectly assisted through awareness and outreach initiatives.



Ozark Henry performing to raise awareness against human trafficking. Photo: EESC.

What can the public do to show solidarity with the victims most affected by this crime and help prevent it?

You might wonder what one person can do about a crime like trafficking in persons. But we can all play our part.

- As a first step, we can educate ourselves about human trafficking and help others become aware of the problem.
- I encourage each and every person to join the [Blue Heart Campaign](#) . The Campaign is on Twitter and Facebook; “Like” and “follow” us for updates and news on human trafficking. I also encourage people to spread the word about the campaign through your own networks and contacts.
- We can be responsible: make sure that our consumer choices and actions are ethical ones. You can pledge not to purchase goods and services that could be linked directly or indirectly with sexual exploitation, forced labour or other forms of forced subjugation.
- We can be supportive and encourage governments, companies and individuals to support

the [United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking](#) .

- You can also be aware of your local anti-trafficking helpline, in case you see anything that might be related to trafficking. But please don't act! Leave it up to trained professionals and call the helpline or the police.

You may also want to check the following websites:

Ozark Henry: <http://ozarkhenry.com/>

Trust Fund success stories: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Human-Trafficking-Fund/UNVTF_brochure2015.pdf