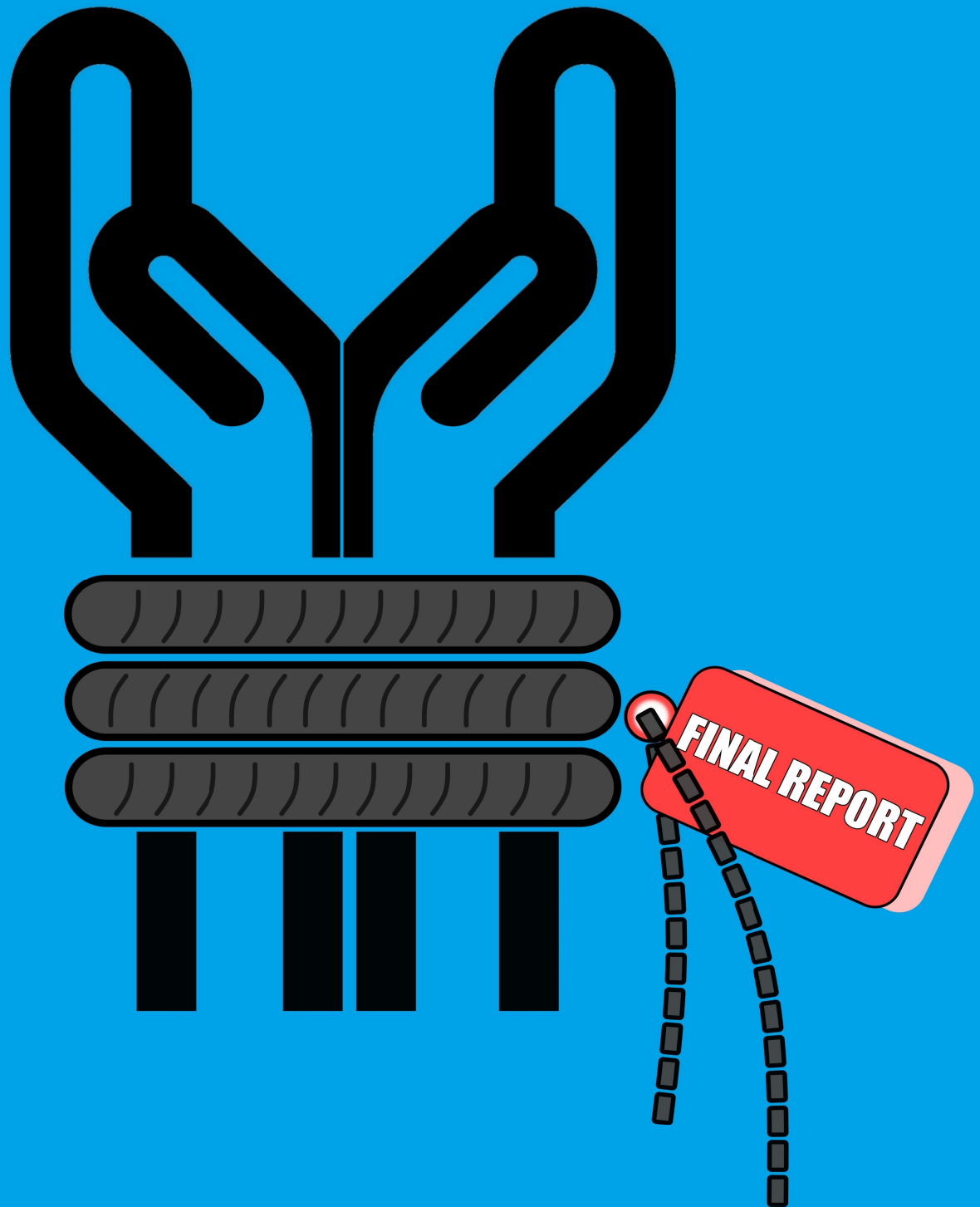




# STRENGTHENING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE TO TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN TURKMENISTAN



## PROJECT SUMMARY

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking in Persons in Turkmenistan</b>
<b>DURATION</b>	<b>February 2019 – June 2021</b>
<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>USD 109,000</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and judiciary bodies of Turkmenistan in investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of TIP related cases</b></li><li>• <b>Facilitating inter-agency and international coordination and cooperation on TIP and raising public awareness to prevent vulnerable populations from becoming victims of human trafficking</b></li></ul>
<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>General Prosecutor’s Office of Turkmenistan</b></li><li>• <b>Ministry of Interior of Turkmenistan</b></li><li>• <b>Technical Working Group to counter trafficking in persons in Turkmenistan</b></li><li>• <b>Other relevant stakeholders</b></li></ul>

The INL-funded project “Strengthening the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons in Turkmenistan” was implemented within the framework of Sub-Programme 2 “Criminal Justice, Crime Prevention and Integrity” of the UNODC Programme for Central Asia 2015-2021 (XAC/Z61).

The project was aimed at strengthening the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons (TIP) in Turkmenistan by strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and judiciary bodies of Turkmenistan in investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of trafficking in persons related cases, facilitating inter-agency and international coordination and cooperation in the field of countering trafficking in persons, as well as raising public awareness to prevent vulnerable populations from becoming victims of trafficking in persons.

## KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST SET TARGETS

Key project achievements can be summarized as follows:



**95 X law enforcement officers and criminal justice practitioners trained**



**4 X coordination meetings / 58 participants**



**1 X consultative meeting on international cooperation and MLA**



**Awareness raising campaigns covering over 2000 persons**



- **95** law enforcement officers and other criminal justice practitioners from Akhal, Lebap and Dashoguz provinces increased their knowledge and skills on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of TIP cases;
- Coordination and cooperation between TIP-authorities was strengthened through four national-level coordination meetings on a national level, involving **58** representatives of the TIP-authorities;
- International cooperation and direct contacts were established between relevant TIP-authorities of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Turkey through consultative meetings on international cooperation and mutual legal assistance in investigation of TIP-related crimes;
- Awareness of over **2000** people on TIP related issues was raised through outreach campaigns, including public events in Ashgabat and Turkmenabat cities and dissemination of information on social media, held on an annual basis (linked to the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons).

## ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

### *Capacity development of law enforcement and judicial bodies to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate TIP cases*

Under this outcome, the project trained **95** criminal justice practitioners during five training courses on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of TIP related cases and mechanisms for international cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

The project worked with relevant law enforcement and judicial training institutions to incorporate standardized TIP training materials in their curricula in line with the 2020-2022 National Action Plan (NAP) of Turkmenistan to counter human trafficking. **As a result, the GPO is now using the project's training manual for its on-the-job training.**



UNODC developed this training manual in 2018 based on the UNODC Global Anti-Human Trafficking Training Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners and reflecting national legislation. In 2019, the project also dubbed two training films on victim-sensitive interviewing and on prosecuting a TIP case in court in Turkmen language.

**Using the manual, in 2020, the GPO conducted 12 training sessions for 265 of its staff on investigation of TIP cases** (as per GPO data reported to the Technical Working Group during its session facilitated by the project on May 30, 2021). **The GPO has also reported the organization of over 450 awareness raising sessions at educational establishments and enterprises of Turkmenistan, as part of its obligations under the 2020-2022 Anti-TIP NAP.**

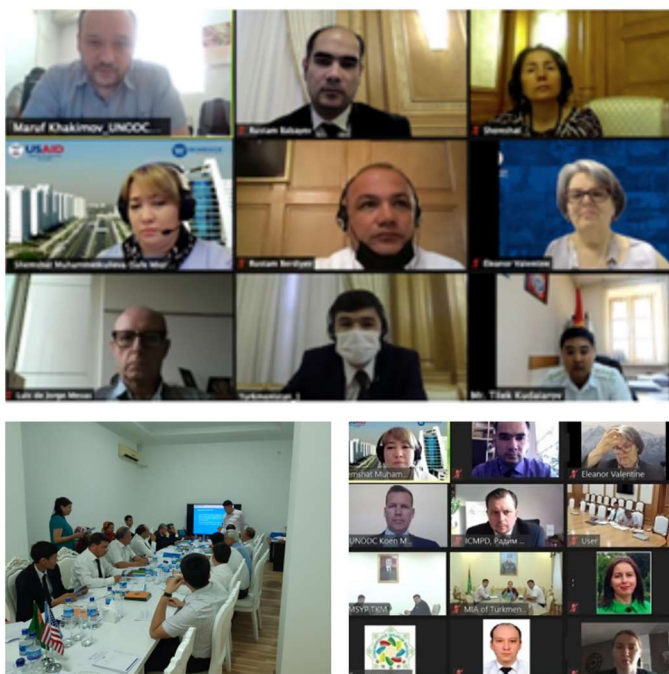
### ***Training and capacity building of criminal justice practitioners***

The project increased professional capacities of **76** law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners (police, prosecutors, judges and migration officers) in Lebap and Dashoguz through four rounds of two-day training courses on investigation and prosecution of TIP cases in July and August 2019.

In August 2019 another **19** criminal justice practitioners increased their knowledge and skills in the field of international cooperation, mutual legal assistance and extradition matters in TIP related cases as a result of a two-day workshop in the Akhal province.

### ***Strengthening international cooperation***

A series of working expert meetings with national counterparts was conducted in 2019 and 2020, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Prosecutor's Office to discuss further cooperation in countering trafficking in persons, including through promotion of international cooperation and mutual legal assistance.



Throughout the implementation period, the project facilitated the participation of the General Prosecutor's Office of Turkmenistan in the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and Southern Caucasus (CASC) aimed at strengthening of criminal justice practitioners' skills in international legal cooperation in transboundary trafficking in persons crime investigations, gaining knowledge on mutual legal assistance in TIP cases and networking with

counterparts from the region and destination countries, such as Turkey and Thailand.



In June 2021 an online consultative meeting on international judicial cooperation and provision of mutual legal assistance in investigation of TIP cases was organized jointly with USAID/Winrock International, engaging representatives of the key entities involved in the process, such as: GPO, Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to establish working contacts and promote cooperation with relevant counter-TIP authorities of the Republic of Turkey and Central Asia. The meeting emphasized the need to conduct such consultations on a regular basis to facilitate and strengthen the cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

### ***Inter-agency co-ordination and public awareness raising***

During the implementation period, the project facilitated four meetings of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Technical Working Group (CTWG) with involvement of **58** representatives of the relevant TIP authorities, UN agencies, international organizations and diplomatic missions to coordinate TIP related activities within the country and review the progress achieved by the TWG members in implementation of the National Anti-TIP Action Plan.

Based on these meetings, TIP activities were coordinated and new initiatives developed. Starting in 2019, UNODC facilitated a two-day workshop for **15** representatives of public sector, youth, civil society organizations and mass media to enhance their knowledge on the root causes, consequences and indicators of trafficking in persons and the use of public awareness raising campaigns as a core instrument for preventing and revealing this



heinous crime. The workshop resulted in the development of a joint action plan for public awareness raising.

The action plan was then implemented in cooperation with national counterparts, international partners, including USAID and IOM, and civil society organizations, such as Junior Achievement and Beyik Eyyam. The 2019 campaign reached more than **1000** young people, representatives of government organizations, law enforcement, public and civil society organizations and academia in Ashgabat and Turkmenabat cities, increasing their knowledge and awareness of risks of becoming a victim of trafficking in persons and threats posed by organized crime. Interventions included a variety of interactive sports and cultural events, quizzes and concerts.

In 2020, the practice of organizing public awareness raising campaigns around the World Day against Trafficking in Persons continued. However, COVID-related restrictions required the campaign to go online. A video ad was created and disseminated through social media to raise awareness on human trafficking and migrant smuggling risks targeting potential migrants and youth who are considering moving abroad for employment or study. Related to the video a contest was announced and six winners awarded who prepared the most interesting and substantive comments on the video and the phenomenon of human trafficking. It is estimated that the video and related social media posts disseminated through official UN channels, but also via a Turkmen blogger's page on Instagram, reached up to **1000** people.



To further facilitate cooperation in the field of public awareness raising on TIP and forced labour, meetings with representatives of the State Migration Service, Institute of State, Law and Democracy, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of population and the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan were held in early 2021.



This resulted in the organization of awareness raising workshops together with USAID/Winrock and the Office of the Ombudsman on labor norms and prevention of trafficking in persons in the private sector and supply

chains in May and July 2021, covering over **88** representatives of government agencies, private and agricultural sector from Ashgabat and all the provinces of Turkmenistan. In parallel, the project partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and USAID/Winrock to present good practices with the implementation of educational programs to raise awareness of trafficking in persons among youth in secondary and tertiary education institutions. This initiative brought together **8** representatives from the Ministry of Education, the MFA's Institute of International Relations, the International University for Humanities and Development, as well as the Ashgabat city administration (Hyakimlik) and specialized secondary school #21. At a later stage (following completion of the project, in October 2021) another meeting was organized to present the teaching modules/materials that the Ministry of Education had expressed interest in, including modules on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, for further adaptation and roll out from 2022 onwards.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND FOLLOW UP

Implementation of the 2020-2022 National Action Plan demonstrated the national government's commitment and participatory approach of all stakeholders to take steps towards efficient implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in Turkmenistan. The Technical



Working Group on trafficking in persons, facilitated by the project, demonstrated a positive impact on coordination of activities of relevant actors during the implementation of the NAP for 2020-2022. During the meetings of the TWG national counterparts expressed their interest in the following follow up activities:

- Conduct consultations on further improving criminal legislation (given that the Parliament has launched a revision), the TIP law and related bylaws based on the findings of UNODC's legal analysis.
- Operationalize the national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking and develop necessary standard operating procedures.
- Organize training of trainers on TIP investigations, victim referral and other related matters, including on how to draft mutual legal assistance requests, for the GPO and other law enforcement and judicial bodies based on the published UNODC manual and other available tools (specifically requested by the GPO).
- Facilitate further training of law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners with the assistance of trained trainers using the project's manual in on-the-job professional trainings on investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons cases (i.e. this can build on the positive experience with the use of the UNODC manual in the GPO's on-the-job training).
- Further facilitate international judicial cooperation with countries of destination.
- Consolidate the practice of organized concerted public awareness raising campaigns on trafficking in persons, including with a package of consolidated information materials in Turkmen language.
- Roll out new educational programs for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education to teach school pupils and students about trafficking in persons and more broadly the importance of the rule of law, ethics and integrity as core elements in the fight against organized crime. (NB. In January 2022 the first training on the use of the materials was conducted with teaching staff of 3 universities and one secondary school of Ashgabat city with authorities expressing strong interest to pursue this further).

## ANNEX - PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA ARTICLES

- 1 Analysis of Turkmenistan's Legislation to Counter Trafficking in Persons (published in 2018 but further used during the project) [https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2018/Legal\\_Assessment\\_Turkmenistan\\_rus.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2018/Legal_Assessment_Turkmenistan_rus.pdf)
- 2 UNODC Case Digest on Evidential Issues in Trafficking in Persons Cases (Russian translation, presented during meetings with counterparts) [https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2020/August/TIP/TIP\\_Case\\_Digest.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2020/August/TIP/TIP_Case_Digest.pdf)
- 3 Anti-Human Trafficking Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners in Turkmenistan *Available on request*
- 4 Victims not Villains – Training Film on victim sensitive interviewing (dubbed in Turkmen) *Available on request*
- 5 Public Awareness Raising Video on trafficking in persons (in Turkmen and Russian) <https://www.facebook.com/UNODCCentralAsia/posts/1837354216388838>  
<https://www.facebook.com/UNinTurkmenistan/videos/1188062334900208/>  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/CDWG7vKg6J6/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CDWG7vKg6J6/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)  
<https://www.facebook.com/UNinTurkmenistan/videos/995549674248254/>
- 6 Web stories on the project: <https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc--usaid-winrock-support-roll-out-of-education-for-justice-initiative-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc-and-partners-mark-world-day-against-trafficking-in-persons-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://turkmenistan.un.org/en/138072-unodc-and-partners-mark-world-day-against-trafficking-persons-turkmenistan>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc--usaid-winrock-and-turkmenistan-discuss-roll-out-of-education-for-justice-tools-to-promote-safe-migration-and-prevent-trafficking-in-persons-and-other-transnational-organized-crime.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/international-judicial-cooperation-and-mutual-legal-assistance-in-investigation-of-trafficking-in-persons-cases-in-focus-during-unodc-and-usaid-winrock-workshop-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc--usaid-and-winrock-international-enhance-work-on-fighting-trafficking-in-persons-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/ensuring-human-rights-in-the-business-sector-is-a-focus-of-the-unodc-and-usaid-webinar-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/advancing-international-law-enforcement-and-judicial-cooperation-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons-in-central-and-southeast-asia-through-unodc-supported-networks.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/expanding-the-partnership-to-eradicate-global-trafficking-in-persons-and-forced-labor.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/over-1000-people-engage-in-unodc-campaign-to-prevent-trafficking-in-persons-in-turkmenistan.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/prevent--detect--investigate--unodc-takes-training-and-awareness-raising-on-trafficking-in-persons-to-the-regions-in-turkmenistan--launches-training-film-in-turkmen-language.html>

<https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/public-awareness-raising-campaigns---main-instrument-to-preventing-trafficking-in-persons.html>



