

# ROMENA Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa

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## Countering Human Trafficking: a core task for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Message by Ms. Cristina Albertin, UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa



In the last years, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants have attained public attention without precedent given the emotional images of drowning migrants and refugees, appalling news on slave markets and heart-breaking testimonies from people identifying their smugglers or traffickers on the journey or at arrival points. With the entry into force in 2003 of the United

Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its supplementary protocols on Trafficking in Persons (TiP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) State parties count with a powerful instrument to comprehensively and effectively counter Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. Both crimes are forms of transnational organized crimes which require state parties to closely cooperate to dismantle criminal networks, bring perpetrators to justice and deliver justice to victims and survivors.

In the case of human trafficking, survivors have been victimized by continuous exploitation for forced labor, prostitution, domestic servitude, illegal adoption, organ trafficking and other forms of exploitation. They are deeply traumatized and need – maybe lifelong – our support, be it medical, psychosocial, legal or socio-economic support, and our readiness to accept them back in society.

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In my many years with UNODC, I have met human trafficking survivors who were able to overcome their trauma and turn to action against human trafficking, advocating, seeking justice and providing shelter and support to victims and survivors.

On 5 October 2018, Nadia Murad, a young Yezidi woman from Iraq, who survived sexual slavery, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her unwavering work seeking justice for survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence perpetrated against her people. As the UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the dignity of the Survivors of Human Trafficking, she is a shining light of hope for survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking, and an icon reminding us of our collective obligation to deliver justice to victims of human trafficking and sexual violence.

As UNODC Regional Representative for North Africa and the Middle East, I am proud of our partnership with many countries in the Region which are committed to end human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and with the countries and organizations that provide funding for this work, such as Belgium, EU, GIZ, Italy and the US.

This Newsletter is dedicated to our work in countering human trafficking. I hope you find it interesting and enjoy reading it.

## Projects of Trafficking in Persons in the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA): A Brief Overview

UNODC is currently implementing **two large projects** countering trafficking in persons in MENA<sup>1</sup> :

1) **Strengthening the Framework of the Arab Region to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling** aiming at strengthening the capacity of Arab States in the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. This regional project comprises several national and regional projects funded by different donors:

- Strengthening the Capacities of Civil Society in Morocco to identify and provide Services to Victims of Trafficking in Persons (funded by the U.S. State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons).
- Strengthening Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Egypt (funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund of the United Kingdom).
- Strengthening Criminal Justice Responses and Operational Cooperation Efforts to combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia (funded by Belgium).
- Better Migration Management -Sudan (funded by the EU/GIZ). Notably, UNODC is focusing on legislative drafting support, with a view to aligning current legislation on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants with international standards and norms; raising awareness amongst journalists; and building capacity of law enforcement officers and criminal justice practitioners to effectively prevent and combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

<sup>1</sup> North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Middle East: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. Countries of the

Gulf Cooperation Council(GCC): Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

- Strengthening the transnational response to Smuggling of Migrants and Maritime Crime in West, North and East Africa (funded by Italy).
- Dismantling the Criminal Networks Operating in North Africa and involved in Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking (funded by the EU under the EU Trust Fund targeting Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia).

2) **The Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT)** is a four-year (2015-2019), €11 million joint initiative by the European Union and the UNODC. The project is being implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to help the governmental authorities and the civil society organizations across 13 selected countries, including Egypt and Morocco from the MENA region. GLO.ACT works with the 13 countries to plan and implement strategic national counter-trafficking and counter smuggling efforts through a prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships approach. It supports the development of more effective responses to trafficking and smuggling, including aiding victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants through the strengthening of identification, referral, and direct support mechanisms.



### Ending Human Trafficking and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity that seeks to strengthen universal peace and larger freedom.” UNODC assists Member States in their efforts to implement the UNTOC and the supplementary Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and so directly contributes to achieving the following SDGs to:

- eliminate violence against women and girls, including trafficking and sexual exploitation;
- end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking and eliminate child labour;
- facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people;
- end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence and torture against children, as well as to combat organized crime.

**To raise awareness of the crime and its negative impact on society, UNODC launched the Blue Heart Campaign in 2009.**



### Promoting the Blue Heart Campaign across the MENA Region

On 30 July 2018 which marks the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, Egypt, Tunisia and Sudan joined the Blue Heart Campaign. In 2011 Lebanon had joined the campaign and announced its commitment to end this crime.

The adoption of the Blue Heart Campaign by the four MENA countries can directly impact the prevention of human trafficking in the Region as it can help save thousands of vulnerable people from falling prey to national and transnational criminal networks. The aim is to reach out to the at-risk groups to raise their awareness and thus prevent becoming a victim of crime.

The campaign provides various tools to reach out to vulnerable and marginalized communities and to share essential information for people to avoid the risk of falling into the trap of trafficking networks.

With technical support from ROMENA, the national committees in the four MENA countries who are designated to combat trafficking in persons can work closely with government entities, the private sector, civil society organizations and individuals to actively participate in the fight against trafficking in persons, show sympathy for the sufferings of the victims and provide them with support. All four MENA countries have adopted national legal framework to counter this crime.

The 2016 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons found that 38% of the detected victims in the MENA Region are women, 13 % are girls and 15% are boys. The statistics show that 66% of trafficked persons in the region are women and children. Forced labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking for begging and trafficking for organ removal are main types of exploitation prevalent in the Region<sup>2</sup>.



In December 2018, UNODC will publish its new Global Report on Trafficking in Persons with the most recent information on human trafficking and the response by countries to it.



### Making it Happen: Tunisia as an example!

UNODC supported Tunisia in developing the National Strategy on TiP 2018-2023. The strategy was adopted by the government and disseminated during the World Day against TiP on 30 July 2018 when Tunisia also joined the Blue Heart Campaign.

Also, in 2018 UNODC supported the establishment of a network of prosecutors and investigative judges with specialized training on human trafficking. Members of this network constitute the National Committee Against Human Trafficking (NCTIP) focal points in the Tunisian governorates. 18 cases of human trafficking are now at different stages of prosecution.

Additionally, through a training of trainers’ roll-out in Tunisian governorates, UNODC trained 104 heads of judicial police brigades in the first trimester of 2018. Most of the trainees had no previous knowledge of the Tunisian Anti-Trafficking Law no. 2016-61 adopted in 2016.

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After the first training in Tabarka in February 2018, it started to produce impact. In early March, a case of sexual exploitation was identified by one of the trainees from the governorate of Bizerte. The judicial police officer put into practice the investigation techniques such as financial investigations, hearings of witnesses and crime and scene investigations to build a solid case and triggered the coordination mechanisms studied during the training.

Thanks to his action and the case referral to the National Committee Against Human Trafficking, ten suspects were arrested, and the foreign victims were accommodated in a shelter.

The main suspect is being prosecuted under the Anti-Trafficking Law, by the prosecutor who is the focal point for the National Committee Against Human Trafficking in Bizerte and has been trained by UNODC on evidential issues in the treatment of TiP cases in February 2018.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16\\_Country\\_profile\\_North\\_AfricaMiddle\\_East.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16_Country_profile_North_AfricaMiddle_East.pdf)

The facts of this case and the statements issued by the judicial police were studied as a good practice during the following training workshops. Notably, since January 2017: 742 cases of human trafficking have been identified by the National Committee against trafficking in persons. 72% are cases of economic exploitation and 19% sexual exploitation. 38% of victims are children and 42% are women or girls.



### Judicial Cooperation in Investigation and Prosecution of Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling

In collaboration with the Prosecutor General Office in Egypt, UNODC/ ROMENA organized the first Africa-Europe conference for prosecutors on international judicial cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt from 18 to 20 Sept 2018. In this regard, here are three key points you need to know about the Conference:

#### The Conference brought together prosecutors from three different regions: North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.

Delegations from the following countries attended the Conference: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Guinea, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, South Africa, Spain Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

Additionally, international and regional organizations working on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants contributed to the deliberations, such as the African Prosecutors' Association, the African Union, the European Union (EU), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

#### The Conference responds to a substantial need for international judicial cooperation between Europe and Africa to combat human trafficking and migrants smuggling.

Countries in Africa and Europe have recognized that the presence of smuggling networks in several countries along the Mediterranean Route collaborating closely between each other requires close coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination to dismantle these networks.

Furthermore, the analysis of their financial transactions with payments originating from multiple countries, including some located in Europe and North America, underscores the need for a comprehensive and increased cooperation with Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) and Anti-Money Laundering Units to respond to the crimes of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

According to recent studies, the Central Mediterranean Route is one of the main entry point to Europe. It connects Northern African Countries to Europe, with 171,309 arrivals to Italy in 2016, and 119,369 arrivals in 2017. It is estimated that up to 90% of the migrants using this route depart from Libya, and on a much less significant scale, Egypt and Tunisia.

Most of the smuggled migrants using this route originate from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Thus, in 2017, the most prevalent countries of origin declared by smuggled migrants who arrived in Italy was Nigeria (15%), followed by Bangladesh, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire (8% each), and then Tunisia, Senegal, Mali, Eritrea and Morocco (5% each).

### The Conference fostered strengthened dialogue and cooperation between prosecutors from countries of origin, transit and destination on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

During the Conference delegations presented developments in regional and international cooperation as well as the response developed by State Parties to investigating and prosecuting human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, including investigative methods, challenges and best practices. One session dealt specifically with cooperation in the protection of victims.

In addition, participants exchanged up-to-date information on trafficking and smuggling networks and the situation of trafficked victims and smuggled migrants in the countries of origin, transit and destination, including the modus operandi used to recruit potential victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants.

Participants also discussed international cooperation mechanisms, including requests for confiscation of proceeds of crimes, extradition, mutual legal assistance and on the possibility to realize joint investigations to dismantle transnational organized crime networks.

By the end of the Conference, the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration was adopted through which participating countries pledged to enhance efforts to improve international cooperation in transnational organized crimes, in particular trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrant, but also in related crimes such as money-laundering.

Participating countries pledged to enhance efforts to improve international cooperation in transnational organized crimes.

The Declaration acknowledged the difficulties most often encountered in international cooperation, particularly in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings, and called for a strong commitment to overcome them.



### UNODC Goodwill Ambassador on Human Trafficking is awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

On 5 October 2018, Ms. Nadia Murad was awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, along with Congolese gynecologist Denis Mukwege, for their efforts to end sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), congratulated Ms. Murad and stressed that she has been "a brave and powerful voice for survivors of human trafficking and victims of sexual violence as a weapon of conflict". He added that "I look forward to continuing our work with and in support of Nadia, to take action against human trafficking and to protect the children, women and men who need us most".

In 2016 Ms. Murad was named by UNODC as the first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking. This designation marks the first time a survivor of atrocities is bestowed with this distinction.

"Trafficking aims to dehumanize the victims, to separate them from their own culture and community, to reduce them to objects to be commercialized", said Ms. Murad in the 26th Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

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As UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Nadia's main goal is to advocate for combating human trafficking and to raise awareness around the plight of millions of victims of trafficking, especially women and girls.

**ROMENA Promoting the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners on Nelson Mandela's Day**



On Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July), UNODC as the guardian of the International Standards and Norms related to the treatment of prisoners reiterated the call for humane conditions of imprisonment, reminded that prisoners are a continuous part of society and appreciated the work of prison staff as a social service of great importance.

**The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment**

of Prisoners provide guidance on the most essential elements of a prison system that meets the requirements of internationally accepted principles and good practice.

To honor the legacy of the previous President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in Prison in his struggle for global human rights, equality, democracy and the promotion of a culture of peace, this set of rules became known in 2015 as the Nelson Mandela Rules after being revised. The revised rules cover the following important topics to inherent to the dignity of prisoners as human beings; Vulnerable groups of prisoners; Medical and health services; Restrictions, discipline and sanctions; Investigation of deaths and torture in custody; Access to legal representation; Complaints and inspections; and Staff training.

UNODC ROMENA can play an important role in helping member states to bring their prison systems closer to the requirements of the

international standards. Several projects have already been implemented and are in progress.

Currently, ROMENA is implementing a project on **“Strengthening Prison Management and Fostering the Social Reintegration of Offenders in line with relevant International Standards and Norms”**. The Regional Project is active in two countries, Egypt and Lebanon. In Egypt it focuses on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law detained in closed and semi-closed Institutions, and in Lebanon it is targeting the reform of the prison system with a focus on adult prisoners with offences related to terrorism and the treatment of children recruited and exploited by violent extremist groups.

On the occasion of the Nelson Mandela International Day, on July 18, ROMENA in partnership with the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the Prison Administration at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) organized an event at the Roumieh prison tribunal to promote Mandela's Rules. The event gathered representatives from the ISF, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the MoJ, and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in Roumieh prison.

In parallel, at the Juvenile Wing, Nelson Mandela's story was shared with 14 children and young adults with offences related to violent extremism, including terrorism.



Each one of them received an inspirational quote of Mandela on which they were requested to reflect and express their views and emotions. By the end of the day, children were invited to hang in their quotes in their rooms to inspire them during their daily lives and actions, and to inform their inmates about what they experienced.

The ceremony concluded with the official handover of a food distribution vehicle to the ISF for adequate and safe distribution of food to all Roumieh buildings.

**Gallery**



## Upcoming Events

- Workshop on Measures of Ensuring the Technical and Administrative Independence of Financial Intelligence units Egypt, October 2018.
- Training on the Provision of Comprehensive Harm Reduction Services to Women Who Inject Drugs, Morocco, October 2018.
- Training Workshop for Law Enforcement Officers on Addressing Crimes of Violence Against Women in Egypt , October 2018.
- Regional Workshop on Alternatives to Imprisonment, Egypt, November 2018.
- Seminar on the Critical Role of the Judiciary in Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, Egypt, November 2018.
- Workshop for parliamentarians on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, Sudan, December 2018.
- National training to support effective requests for extradition and mutual legal assistance, including in procedures against Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Jordan, December 2018.



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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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