Protection and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons

IOM’s Global Assistance Fund (GAF) provides assistance in countries of destination, transit and origin which can include safe accommodation, medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, assistance with retrieving lost or stolen travel documents and career counselling.

GAF also offers the option of assisted voluntary return in cases in which the beneficiary expresses a wish to return to his or her home country as well as reintegration assistance, which may consist of post-arrival reception assistance, educational support either for the beneficiary or for his or her children, skills training and small business grants to support income-generating activities.

Geographical Coverage

GAF is available to stranded trafficked persons worldwide, excluding Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States of America.

How to Access the Global Assistance Fund

Trafficked persons in need of protection can apply directly to IOM’s Migrant Assistance Division in Geneva, Switzerland, at iomglobalassistance@iom.int, the nearest IOM country office, or by way of referral from an IOM partner, including identified intergovernmental agencies, government ministries and embassies, and non-governmental and civil society organizations.

For more information, please contact us:
International Organization for Migration
Migrant Assistance Division
IOMGlobalAssistance@iom.int

IOM’s Global Assistance Fund (GAF) is an emergency support mechanism that provides case-specific assistance to men, women, and children who have been trafficked across international borders, and who are not eligible for assistance through comparable regional or national-level projects.

Funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), and the Nippon Foundation, GAF has provided direct assistance to more than 1,499 victims of trafficking since its inception in 2000 and serves an increasingly diverse range of beneficiaries every year.
Meet Selenge: Regaining strength after being held in shackles in a circus

Upon moving to Russia to work as an aerial acrobat, Selenge was denied her full salary, severely beaten and threatened into silence.

To support her family, rather than attend school, 13-year-old Selenge agreed to move to Russia to work as an aerial acrobat in a circus. Shortly after her arrival, Selenge was denied the full salary promised in her contract, severely beaten by her circus trainer Enkh-Amgalan and ordered to work overtime. Sometimes, during rehearsal, Enkh-Amgalan would slam Selenge’s head against the wall. The circus trainer would often threaten Selenge, so much so that she feared for her life. Furthermore, she said that if Selenge told her mother, she would put the family into un-repayable debt.

Acting on suspicions, her mother finally went to Russia, and discovered Selenge’s situation. Her physical health was in a critical condition, and she had suffered serious psychological abuse. Upon Selenge’s return to Mongolia and hospitalisation in Ulan Bator, the Mongolian police suggested that her mother contact the Mongolian Gender Equality Centre.

The Centre staff, with the support of the IOM Global Assistance Fund, provided financial assistance for Selenge’s urgent specialist medical and psychosocial treatment. Prior to speaking with the Centre, Selenge and her mother had no idea how to start a criminal case against Enkh-Amgalan. However, the Centre was able to provide free legal advice to help Selenge and her mother eventually convict Enkh-Amgalan under the Mongolian Criminal Code. Enkh-Amgalan was delivered a five-year prison sentence, and ordered to pay Selenge and her family a small compensation.

What is next for Selenge? She is now on the road to recovery, but her health remains poor. The Centre has recently filed a claim at the civil court for her former trainer to provide compensation for her ongoing health expenses, and waiting for their decision.

Meet Aliou: Returning home after years in servitude

Tricked into believing he would be a Talibé – a Qur’anic school student – and learn about city life, Aliou - no more than six years old - was forced to work by a trawler under the watchful eyes of men armed with guns. For two years, Aliou never left the boat, anxiously that he might never see his family again - or indeed leave the boat. Filled with fear and un-trusting his return. The plan is to enroll him in primary school so he can continue his education while in the evenings Aliou would like to attend a daara close to his village with his family.

Meet Akra: Building a life after years of captivity at sea

Akra had hopes for a better life when he, at 19, accepted an offer from a trusted friend. He was promised a well-paid job in a garment factory in Thailand but was faced with captivity in the far reaches of the South China Sea.

The garment factory did not exist. Instead, after crossing the border from Cambodia, Akra was forced into a van that took him to the coast of Thailand. Here, he was immediately led onto a fishing trawler under the watchful eyes of men armed with guns. For two years, Akra never left the ship working inhumane hours in dangerous conditions, sleeping on a crowded deck with 40 other men.

“We were threatened to be thrown overboard if we did not comply with our masters”, Akra explains. With horrifying stories of assaults to the workers going around, Akra was getting increasingly anxious that he might never see his family again – or indeed leave the boat. Filled with fear and under cover of the night, Akra managed to one night sneak onto a little service boat that had docked to their vessel. And from there, he escaped to the mainland.

A local IOM office took Akra in and answered his pleas. With the help of IOM’s Global Assistance Fund to that office, Akra was able to receive the essential support needed to return home safely.

What is next for Akra? Since returning home to his family, he was able to start a weaver’s apprenticeship in his home town and is hoping to one day take over the shop. He vowed to never seek employment overseas again.

IOM’s Global Assistance Fund supports the local NGO that located Aliou’s family and is drawing up a reintegration programme in preparation for his return. The plan is to enroll him in primary school so he can continue his education while in the evenings Aliou would like to attend a daara close to his village with his family.

What is next for Aliou? Home, he says. He wants to return to Guinea-Bissau and finish studying the Qur’an at the local Qur’anic school, or daara, and learn Creole. Adeline, the social worker responsible for him at the Dakar shelter, has been teaching him to read and write. She says that “most of the children coming to the centre are very quick and bright. They jump at any opportunity to learn something, and we should encourage them to continue with their education once they return home.”

‘...the traditional practice of Marabout has in some instances resulted in child exploitation, as is the case for many children sent to what parents think are Qur’anic schools but where they are in fact forced to beg, often far from their community of origin’

Labour Exploitation

Child Trafficking

Donate now to help those victims of trafficking who otherwise have no chance of being assisted by international mechanisms - like Aliou, Akra, and Selenge, at www.IOM.int.