



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## **UNODC Executive Director's Message**

### **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons**

*30 July 2024*

Human trafficking leaves deep scars.

And when the victims are children, those scars can come to define the rest of their lives.

This year's theme for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons focuses on child victims, which have tripled over the past 15 years.

According to UNODC data, children account for more than a third of victims detected globally, and in some regions, they constitute the majority.

Poverty, conflict, climate change, and inadequate parental support are leaving too many children, easy prey for traffickers.

And once trafficked, they endure horrific abuse.

They are forced to work under horrendous conditions in sweatshops, on farms, and construction sites.

They are made to beg on the street, commit crime, or work as domestic servants.

They are recruited as child soldiers, while others are trafficked as they attempt to flee the shadow of war.

And many, particularly girls, face gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and forced marriage.

Meanwhile, digital technologies are enabling exploitation, with artificial intelligence generating thousands of images of child sexual abuse.

Last year, the United Nations policy forum on human trafficking, ICAT, called for united action to end child trafficking.

Now we must heed that call, by stepping up responses and working across all sectors of society, including governments, the private sector, tech companies, schools, healthcare, and social workers.

As a mother and a grandmother, I want to leave behind a world where no child is exploited, trafficked, or abused.

Let's work together to make the world safer for all children.