

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 30 July 2021

Statement of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Ghada Waly

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English statement

Each and every victim of trafficking in persons has a story we should listen to. Victims' voices are key to preventing trafficking, supporting survivors, and bringing perpetrators to justice. Traffickers choose their victims from among the vulnerable, exploiting desperation and lack of awareness. The majority of those targeted are people in economic need who are misled. Almost two-thirds of detected victims are women and girls, and the share of children has tripled in the last 15 years. But despite their real and perceived vulnerabilities, survivors of trafficking are examples of strength, courage, and resilience.

On this year's World Day against Trafficking in Persons, I salute victims as they rebuild their own lives and help protect those of others. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has launched a campaign titled 'Victims' Voices Lead the Way' to put a spotlight on victims' untold stories, and on their roles in the fight against trafficking. Member States must engage, listen, and learn from survivors, and support victim-led organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened vulnerabilities to trafficking, making victims' contributions more critical than ever.

At UNODC, we continue to assist countries and all stakeholders in implementing the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and in developing victim-centred approaches. Through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, we also provide essential support to victims, and help empower them as part of the response. I thank our partners who have contributed to the Fund and call on all Member States to support it.

I also call on you to join our campaign, and to share and amplify victims' stories. Inspired and guided by the resilience of those who survived, we can build the resilience of our societies to trafficking in persons, help prevent and alleviate suffering, end impunity, and achieve justice.