

Victims' Voices Lead the Way: incorporating survivor perspectives into counter-trafficking conversations and responses

A Special Event on the occasion of World Day against Trafficking in Persons

**organised by UNODC and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus on behalf of the Group of Friends
United against Human Trafficking**

Friday 30 July 2021, 10:30 – 12:15 New York Time (ET)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus, on behalf of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, are organizing a Special Event on the occasion of the 2021 World Day against Trafficking in Persons, which takes place annually on 30 July.

The Special Event addresses the 2021 UN-wide theme for the World Day against Trafficking in Persons: “Victims’ Voices Lead the Way”. As such, this Special Event will highlight the importance of listening to, and learning from, victims and survivors of human trafficking. It will draw attention to victims and survivors as key actors in the fight against human trafficking and address the crucial role they should play in counter-trafficking conversations and responses, including establishing effective measures to prevent this crime, identify and rescue victims and survivors, and support them on their road to rehabilitation. The voices of survivors will be incorporated into this Special Event.

BACKGROUND

The 2021 World Day against Trafficking in Persons is intended to provide an opportunity for victims and survivors to share their personal stories through events planned across the globe. This Special Event to be held virtually at UNHQ in New York is intended to reflect on the importance of victim and survivor empowerment, and integrating survivor perspectives into counter-trafficking conversations and responses.

It is crucial that victims who have been exploited by human traffickers are identified, treated humanely as victims of a crime with corresponding rights, and provided with the assistance, protection and support necessary for their physical, psychological and social recovery. However, many victims of human trafficking still experience ignorance or misunderstanding in their attempts to seek help. Rescue or post-rescue experiences may be traumatic, including interviews and legal proceedings. Some victims face revictimization and punishment for crimes they were compelled to commit by their traffickers. Others feel invisible, are subject to stigmatization, and/or receive inadequate support.

In 2020, the international community marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. 2021 is an equally momentous year, with the General Assembly conducting an appraisal of the 2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This Special Event is therefore occurring at a time in which the General Assembly and UN entities are paying close attention to how to strengthen collective action to combat trafficking in persons.



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



COVID-19 is also continuing to have a significant impact on victims and survivors of trafficking, as well as service providers working to assist them so now, more than ever, it is important for victims' voices to lead the way as we learn about the effects of the pandemic on victims and survivors. To this end, UNODC's paper on "The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficking in persons and responses to the challenges: A global study of emerging evidence" (July 2021) is also timely.

OBJECTIVE

This Special Event is intended as an occasion to recommit to working together to advance our efforts to address trafficking in persons, with victims' voices leading the way. It aims to provide an opportunity to listen to, and learn from, survivors of trafficking in persons, as well as those civil society organizations and service providers working directly with victims.

FORMAT

The Special Event will take place fully virtually and be divided into three segments. Segment One will feature opening remarks on the occasion of World Day against Trafficking in Persons. Segment Two will feature the voices of survivors and civil society organizations working directly with survivors. Segment Three will consist of pre-registered interventions from the virtual floor.

REGISTRATION

Kindly register [HERE](#) by Wednesday 28 July 2021. Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including survivors of trafficking in persons, who would like to intervene during Segment Three are kindly requested to indicate this when completing the registration form.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

In interventions, speakers are encouraged to address the following guiding questions:

- 1. How can Member States and UN entities empower victims and survivors as key actors in the fight against human trafficking?*
- 2. How can Member States and UN entities meaningfully incorporate victims' and survivors' voices into counter-trafficking conversations and responses?*
- 3. What good practices already exist in terms of communication and coordination with victims and survivors of trafficking as part of counter-trafficking responses? What more can be done?*
- 4. What recommendations do victims and survivors of human trafficking have for Member States involved in the inter-governmental negotiations on the 2021 appraisal of the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons?*