



Statement of the Workshop on Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery

The Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences and the Fédération internationale des Associations de Médecins catholiques



Human trafficking is the most extensive form of slavery in this 21st century!

Pope Francis, [*Easter Message 2013*](#)

Each human being is a free person, whether man, woman, girl or boy, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people – men, women, girls and boys – are equal and have the same freedom and dignity constitutes a grave crime against humanity.

Despite the efforts of many, trafficking in human beings – the most extensive form of slavery in our twenty-first century – is a plague on a vast scale in many countries across the world. Victims are hidden away in private homes, in illegal establishments, in factories, on farms, behind closed doors, in families, houses and other places in the cities, villages and slums of the world's richest and poorest nations. This situation is not improving but, on the contrary, is probably deteriorating.

There is now a compelling need to put an end to trafficking in human beings and all forms of exploitation, particularly prostitution, forced labour, the harvesting of human organs and the use of children as drug dealers and in the production of pornographic material, especially on the Internet.

Trafficking in human beings in all its forms, and in particular trafficking for sexual exploitation and

prostitution, must be declared a crime against humanity. Traffickers should be prosecuted on the basis of clear international and national laws, including the confiscation of the profits derived from their illegal activities, and the victims ought to be fully compensated from such funds.

All stakeholders, at all levels, have a moral and legal duty to eradicate this grave violation of human rights and strive to ensure that all human beings co-exist in freedom, equality, harmony and peace, in accordance with the values common to our shared humanity. With the support of academics, moral and religious leaders, together with the influence of a global movement and social networks, we must expose these hidden crimes by using today's technology and working through good and just national and international institutions. **It is our moral imperative to make ours the last generation that has to fight the trade in human lives.**

We suggest that:

The Holy See

1. Signs and ratifies the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
2. Signs and ratifies the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the 'Palermo Protocol').
3. Ratifies the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
4. Commits the Permanent Missions of the Holy See in international organisations to insisting upon the urgency of a global strategy against trafficking in human beings.
5. Encourages the ratification of the International Convention on Migrant Workers (18 December 1990) and the Domestic Workers Convention of the ILO (16 June 2011) and advocates the inclusion of domestic workers and agricultural workers in national labour laws.
6. Promotes a movement to ensure the commitment of the Catholic Church and of all men and women of good will to stopping human trafficking and prostitution; one that is stated in the clearest and most decisive terms.
7. Encourages male religious Orders to work alongside female religious to alleviate the immediate suffering and long-term social exclusion of trafficked persons.

International Organisations

1. Forcefully stress that the trafficking in human beings is first and foremost a severe form of human-rights violation.
2. Insert as a specific objective the ending of trafficking in human beings in the new post-2015 Global Development Goals.
3. Take all possible actions to reduce the demand for all forms of exploitation damaging to human life and especially sexual exploitation.
4. Establish codes of conduct and specifically a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual

exploitation and other abuses deleterious to human life and well-being.

Governments and National Authorities

1. Prepare national action plans to address trafficking in human beings, including measures to avoid re-trafficking, in cooperation with civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations.
2. Establish a national mechanism to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings and to protect its victims.
3. Ensure the necessary political, legal and financial support to the courts, the administrative offices and the security forces involved in action against trafficking in human beings at all levels, including enhanced 'Witness Protection Schemes' for those trafficked who are willing to testify in court or supply information to the police that improves the chances of apprehending traffickers and accessories to this crime.
4. Resist hasty, automatic and involuntary repatriation of those who have been trafficked and develop programmes for their housing and re-training, in the expectation that these will result – when desired – in the granting of a work permit in the host country.
5. Take urgent action to curb the demand that fuels all forms of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation, and criminalise the clients of prostitution as a deterrent against sex trafficking. This entails recognition that the trafficking of women, girls and boys is intrinsically linked with legalised prostitution systems and the commercialisation of sex.
6. Ensure that businesses are sufficiently regulated and held accountable for abuses that occur. Prohibit the supply of sexual material and advertisements for sexual activities in hotels and other public places.
7. Consider the key role of the Internet and especially pornography in facilitating the online recruitment of victims for trafficking in human beings and legislate against possible damage involved. Promote the incorporation, at point of sale, of 'default settings' on computers precluding access to pornographic material.
8. Introduce a compulsory system of birth registration, incorporating DNA identification in cases of risk or need.
9. Ensure the full confiscation of assets from criminals.
10. Ensure appropriate compensation to victims.
11. Target financial investigation, increased prosecution and conviction for traffickers.
12. Intensify the training of all relevant actors and particularly front-line officials in the work against trafficking in human beings.
13. Prioritise the eradication of child trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, and ensure the early identification of children who may be victims. To this end consider innovative means such as the establishment of national DNA databases to identify and prevent child trafficking.

Civil Society Organisations

1. Promote enhanced awareness campaigns concentrating specifically on different forms of exploitation, especially targeting the demand for sexual and labour exploitation.
2. Create networks of associations of professionals relevant to the work against trafficking in human beings and protecting and assisting its victims pro bono.
3. Create online resources to address this global phenomenon and to foster appropriate action.
4. Lobby for the establishment of free national 'Helplines' for victims and their wide public visibility.

The Business Community

1. Introduces strict codes of conduct and legislation on transparency for supply chains that are free of trafficked and other forms of enslaved labour.
2. Raises awareness about the serious risks and damage involved in the 'race to the bottom' to minimise labour costs, risks that exist per se and because they frequently entail forced labour.

Christians

3. Ensure the effective and systematic involvement of Bishops' Conferences, bishops, clergy, Congregations, parishes, schools and media instruments in knowledge about, and action against, trafficking in human beings.
4. Incorporate the subject of human trafficking into pastoral care in formation courses and create an advocacy community opposed to such trafficking that is specially trained to dialogue with diplomatic communities, the business world, police/security forces and others on behalf of victims.
5. Create working groups on the topic of trafficking in human beings, focusing on concrete actions and preparing position papers on key issues that could form the basis for future statements (by Church leaders).
6. Strengthen public knowledge and support popular understanding and quality research regarding all forms of exploitation associated with trafficking.

All Religions

1. Reinforce inter-confessional and ecumenical networks locally, regionally and internationally in order to create an ever-growing pool of resources to help victims.
2. Provide access for those from local churches and other faith groups to training and resources to promote an appropriate community-level response in all activities connected with trafficking in human beings.
3. Educate people on the phenomenon and scale of trafficking in human beings and stress that this is a grave form of human rights' violation.
4. Give victims access to monasteries, convents and religious houses and make every effort to assess their pressing needs.
5. Coordinate the work against trafficking in human beings by all faith-based organisations and ensure the active participation of nuncios, religious representatives and diplomats.

6. Establish a World Day of prayer, fasting, action, and reflection on trafficking in human beings.
7. Reach out to all people, women, men, girls, and boys, and raise awareness of their moral duty to refrain from any activities, including any involvement in the sex industry, that fuel trafficking in human beings.

All People of Good Will

1. Cooperate to forward these proposals, by acting together and sharing information, with the aim of eradicating this grossly inhumane practice of our times.