

WEBSTER GENEVA 2022

27th Annual International Humanitarian & Security Conference (IHSC) – 1 November,
International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG)

"Call for Improved Cooperation for a Better Protection of Human Trafficking Victims"
at the domestic, regional and international level

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We have more slaves today than ever in history. 50 million according to the ILO-IOM-Walk Free Report of 12 September 2022, 10 million more than the last assessment, 6 years ago. Criminals are operating worldwide with impunity and making 150 billion US Dollars a year while 50 million people suffer.

Human Trafficking is a form of contemporary slavery, the exploitation of a human being, combined with coercion or deception. It takes the form of forced labor, child recruitment, forced sex, purchase and theft of children, child pornography, mostly on the internet, organ theft for transplantation, forced crime (from begging to terrorism).

Different forms, different victims in all countries, including Europe, where the number of victims is estimated at 1.3 million, 50% for sexual exploitation, 40% for forced labor and 6% for forced crime.

We have **plenty of legal instruments and implementation mechanisms**

- **at the international level** (the 2000 Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking - as well as the Palermo Protocol on Migrant Smuggling), and HR, IHL, Refugee Law, International Law of the Sea instruments, as well as ILO Conventions on migrant workers and their families, on extreme forms of work for children. HT is listed among the war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- **at the regional level** (the best example is the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings).

We also have commitments at the G20, at the G7 (last year), at the UN, at OSCE and with the 2011 European Union Directives.

And yet not much is really happening!

What to do?

- Raise awareness
- Share best practices
- Promote measures at the local, domestic, regional and international level.

We need to co-operate, engage and involve stakeholders: **Governments, civil society, religious organizations and religious leaders, as well as the business sector and the media, without forgetting academia and education.**

We should not forget to **Include victims and survivors** in prevention, protection and rehabilitation.

We need to **engage with the international bodies, the UN, the ILO, the IOM, UNODC**, the World Health Organization, UNHCR, the ICRC, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, OSCE, the Council of Europe, African Union, ECOWAS, SADC, the “Organisation internationale de la Francophonie”, the Commonwealth, NGOs such as MSF (“Doctors without Borders”), and all our networks to inform and start to get more interest and action.

For this, we shall **increase public pressure** on Governments, Parliaments, businesses and civil society at large, including media, religious organizations and consumers.

Academia, universities like Webster could play an important role in raising awareness, doing research and training stakeholders in identifying, protecting and rehabilitating victims and survivors of human trafficking and contemporary slavery.

Training is important, including for lawyers, judges and prosecutors.

Online training exists in English and French, as well as websites collecting best practices. We need to **develop face-to-face and hybrid training sessions, in Geneva and in the field.** In Africa, we are planning training sessions with local communities. In Geneva, even humanitarian workers, diplomats and international civil servants, volunteers as well as police officers, priests, medical students and doctors could benefit from training in a better identification, protection and rehabilitation of victims and survivors.

Together it is possible to break the chains of slavery:

At the end of the last century, in 1997 and 1998, two coalitions achieved a result that no one expected:

- In 1997, the Coalition for the Total Abolition of Anti-Personnel Mines achieved the adoption of the Ottawa Convention....

- In 1998, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC) achieved the adoption of the Rome Statute. Human trafficking is a crime against humanity and a war crime.

It is a similar coalition that we need, to achieve the abolition of modern slavery.

In conclusion, here are five proposals:

1. **Adapt international treaties and domestic legislations to combat contemporary slavery on the internet**, especially on the Dark Web, on pornography and sexual exploitation

- 2. Implement existing treaties,** domestic legislation and National Action Plans
- 3. Raise awareness and train stakeholders** on identification, protection, rehabilitation and compensation of victims
- 4. Monitor supply chains and public procurements** to guarantee slave-free products and services
- 5. Increase support to prevention, protection and rehabilitation efforts** by Governments and civil society.

Thanks for listening and for your support.