



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

52nd Session of the Human Right Council
Side-Event on Human Trafficking in Armed Conflicts and Post-Conflict Situations
Palais des Nations, Geneva, 27 March 2023
Report

On Monday, March 27th, 2023, the **Sovereign Order of Malta** with **Caritas Internationalis**, **Secours Catholique - Caritas France** and the support of **COATNET**, organised a side-event on “Human Trafficking in Armed Conflicts and Post-Conflict Situations”. The event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of **Costa Rica, Italy, Poland, Romania** and the **Sovereign Order of Malta**.

The aim of the event was to **address the root causes of human trafficking in armed conflicts** and post-conflict situations and all other crimes that often coincide with human trafficking such as sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced labour, recruitment and use of child soldiers, rape and other forms of sexual violence. These root causes require a comprehensive approach that involves cooperation between governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Efforts must also be made to address the demand side of human trafficking—including the demand for cheap labor, forced prostitution, and other forms of exploitation. This can be achieved through the implementation of effective legal instruments and policies as well as through education and awareness-raising campaigns targeting the general public, law enforcement officials, and other key stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure that **the needs of victims of human trafficking** are adequately addressed. This includes providing them with access to justice, protection, and support services such as healthcare, psychosocial support, and education. It is also important to recognize the diversity of victims of human trafficking, including men, women, and children of all ages, nationalities, and backgrounds. It is also important to prioritize the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups, including refugees, internally displaced persons, and other marginalized populations. This requires coordinated efforts by humanitarian and development actors, including the United Nations, regional organisations, national governments, and civil society organizations including private business, without forgetting FBOs and human trafficking victims and survivors, to ensure that the specific needs and risks are addressed in a timely and effective manner.

Ambassador Veuthey highlighted the **work done by the Order of Malta** to prevent and combat human trafficking in armed conflicts by advocating for and acting on behalf of victims. He then mentioned the prevalent forms of trafficking in the context of armed conflict, which are sexual exploitation, enslavement, forced marriage, forced labor, recruitment and exploitation of child soldiers, and the removal of organs to treat injured fighters or finance operations. Furthermore, he reaffirmed the wide spectrum of international legal instruments which should be better used for the protection of human trafficking victims in armed conflicts such as human rights law, international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts, and international criminal law without forgetting refugee law, the protection of migrant workers, maritime law, and both Palermo Protocols, against human trafficking and against migrant smuggling.



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Here is the list of the speakers:

- **Ms. Geneviève Colas**, Member of the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme, national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings (France);
- **Prof. Michel Veuthey**, Ambassador of the Order of Malta to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons;
- **Ms. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict;
- **Ms. Natalia Holynska**, Manager of counter-trafficking projects, Caritas Ukraine and COATNET;
- **Ms. Codruta Fernea**, President of Catholic Action Romania. She collaborates with the Order of Malta in Romania;
- **Ms. Hessen Sayah**, Head of Protection Department, Caritas Lebanon and COATNET;
- **Ms. Mikiko Otani**, Chair, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Here is the list of the **Permanent Missions which have attended the event**: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, France, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, the U.S., the European Union, the University for Peace, the Sovereign Order of Malta.

The side-event was attended by 190 people, 70 in Geneva, and 120 online.

The video recording is now available on Webex UNTV (see the link and password below). A version sub-titled in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian, shall be posted on Vimeo and <http://nohumantrafficking.ordrofmalta.int> on Wednesday, March 29, 2023.

APPENDIXES

- PowerPoint slides of the event (in PDF format)
- Transcriptions of the interventions (English & French)
- Link for the video recording:

vimeo.com/adlaudatosi/htinarmedconflict

Geneva, 28 March 2023