



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING
PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES & CARE OF VICTIMS
A Call to Action Amongst Government, Civil Society, and Health Care Professionals**

**Event organized by the Permanent Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta in New York,
Global Strategic Operatives and Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST)
Co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of France, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Nigeria**

New York, UN Headquarters, Trusteeship Council Chamber, 11 January 2024

**Professor Michel Veuthey
Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta
to monitor and combat human trafficking.**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

First, I would like to **thank Ambassador Beresford-Hill** for inviting me to this important event, and to express my gratitude to his team, for their efficient and friendly support.

Human trafficking, a form of contemporary slavery, affects all countries. It is an ever-growing plague that cannot leave us indifferent. If slavery were an American State, it would have a greater population than that of California and the economic output of the District of Columbia. If slavery were a country, it would have the third largest CO₂ emissions on the planet. after China and the USA.

Today **50 million people** worldwide are victims of contemporary slavery. There have never been as many slaves in history as there are today.

We are here to reflect and act together. Contemporary slavery affects millions of people in different forms:

1. Forced labour
2. Sexual slavery,
3. Sale and abduction of children, forced motherhood
4. Child pornography,
5. Organ theft
6. Forced crime, from begging to terrorism.



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

We must pay tribute to the important efforts made to codify **treaties which could prevent human trafficking and protect victims and survivors:**

MAKE FULL USE OF ALL INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 1979
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989**
- **Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2000**
- **Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000**
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990
- **Convention Nr. 182 against the worst forms of child labour, 1999**
- Council of Europe (COE), European Convention on Human Rights, 1950
- **COE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005**
- **COE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, 2007**
- UE, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000
- OAS, American Convention on Human Rights, 1969
- AU, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981
- ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, 2012

LABOUR LAW

- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975
- COE, European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, 1977
- UE, Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

- Geneva Conventions of the 12 August 1949
- Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of the 12 August 1949, 1977

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW

- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), 1998

HT as a war crime and crime against humanity

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME LAW

- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974
- International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), 1979
- U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982
- 2004 Amendments to the SOLAS and SAR

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT LAW

- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951
- Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967
- Convention relating to the status of stateless persons, 1954
- African Union for the protection and assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009)

U.N. CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (UNTOC) 2000

- **Palermo Protocol** to Prevent, Suppress and Punish **Trafficking** in Persons, especially Women and Children
- **Palermo Protocol** against the **Smuggling of Migrants** by Land, Sea and Air

**Do not forget restorative justice:
rehabilitating victims & offenders through reconciliation**



We should **make full use of all legal instruments and implementation mechanisms** to prevent and combat human trafficking: human rights, labour law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law (under specific circumstances human trafficking could be prosecuted as a war crime or a crime against humanity), international maritime law, refugee and migrant law, the Palermo Convention and its Protocols, without forgetting restorative justice.

According to international legal experts, including **Kevin Hyland**, one of today's keynote speakers, implementation is failing both at the domestic and international level.

Allow me to also quote **Valiant Richey**, a former US prosecutor, who until April of last year was the OSCE's Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings:

"Some 20 years ago, in 2000, the Palermo Protocol provided us with the first international definition of trafficking and highlighted the three pillars of our response: protection, prosecution and prevention. But sadly, more than two decades later, trafficking is worse than ever, and no country has defeated it. I think we really need States to implement their international legal obligations".

Another expert, **Vincent Cochetel** (UNHCR's Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Situation) during our side-event to the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva one month ago said: *"I would like to share*



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

my frustration at the growing gap between the renewed political calls suggesting that more is being done against human traffickers —and the reality I know. My concern also relates to the growing gap between capacity building efforts and victim assistance in this field: a recent report from the UN system in March 2023 documented that most of the funding relating to human trafficking go towards data collection, research, soft capacity building activities.”

And then I would like to quote **Mgr. Robert J. Vitulo**, Secretary-General of the ICMC (International Catholic Migration Commission), who declared that to fully implement legal instruments, we need to better understand the nature of human trafficking: *“Human trafficking certainly represents one of the greatest human rights failures of past and present eras. **Such failure may be rooted in our limited focus on the legal and technical aspects.** With all due respect to the attorneys here and promotion of human rights, whilst such elements are fundamental to such efforts, they are not at all sufficient. Given the complex phenomena of human trafficking and forced unsafe migration, I am fully aware of the impossibility to capture all the root causes in a short period of time. **Among the root causes are the obsession of business almost exclusively on amassing more money and profit which easily leads to the commodification and exploitation of people with the consequence of extreme poverty and unequal access to enjoy basic human rights and the demand side: “Consumers constitute a huge mass who seem largely unaware of the exploitation yet enjoy the benefits of the services provided by trafficked persons.”***

What can we do?

The Sovereign Order of Malta would like to **highlight the important role of religious leaders and religious congregations** in the protection and assistance to victims and survivors of human trafficking. Allow me to mention:

1. The **Santa Marta Group**, a global partnership with representatives of the Catholic Church, police agencies and international organizations from 30 countries. We have the honor to have Kevin Hyland, Global Strategy Director of Santa Marta with us.
2. The **International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)** protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants — regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, or nationality.
3. The **Talitha Kum Network**, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Human Trafficking, with Members from 92 countries.
4. **Australian Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN)**, facilitated by the Anti-Slavery Taskforce of the Archdiocese of Sydney (CAS), which was established by a Knight of Malta, former Ambassador of Australia to the Holy See, John McCarthy.

and others:

5. **Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)**, working in 52 countries.



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

6. **COATNET** (Caritas), a global network of Christian organizations working to combat human trafficking and assisting survivors of modern slavery with 45 Christian (Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox) organizations in 39 countries.
7. The **Catholic Coalition against Human Trafficking**, based at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.
8. The **U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking**, a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy to eradicate modern-day slavery.
9. **Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation** (RENATE), a network of 139 organizations working in 31 countries.
10. **Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII**, in Italy, with over 60 family homes outside of Italy.
11. **Africa Network against Human Trafficking** (ANHAT).
12. **Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans** (ACRATH).
13. **SOLWODI** (Solidarity with Women in Distress), active in Germany, Austria, Rumania, Hungary and Africa.
14. **The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd** (RGS).
15. **The Sisters of St Louis**, Nigeria.
16. **The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul**.

I would also like to highlight the **Catholic Church's Social Doctrine**. It makes possible to identify and tackle the root causes of the resurgence of slavery, the first of which is the loss of ethical reference protecting the fundamental rights of the human person and his or her family, social and natural environment. Two key documents are: the "**Laudato si'**" **Encyclical Letter** and the "**Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking**". Shared universal fundamental values and prayers based on an Interreligious dialogue respecting the life and dignity of every human person could also be an important contribution.

The **Order of Malta** contributes to the fight against human trafficking by:

- **Advocating** through its bilateral diplomatic network (113 States) and multilateral diplomatic network through statements at each session of the Human Rights Council, UN General Assembly and even at the Security Council (last month, on the 7th of December, Ambassador Beresford-



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

Hill, the Order's Ambassador in New York, made a statement before the Security Council on human trafficking as a threat to international peace and security).

- **Assisting** victims through medical and social programs through its National Associations and its worldwide humanitarian organization "Malteser International", often in cooperation with local Catholic bishops (among others in Boston, Mass., Salzburg, Austria, Sydney, Australia, and Tangiers, Morocco) and congregations (such as the Sisters of Saint Louis in Lagos, Nigeria, for the "Bakhita House", a shelter for survivors).
- **Offering a free online training course for helpers** in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish as well as Portuguese, on <https://www.cuhd.org>.
- **Cooperating with Universities:**
 - implementing a Memorandum of Understanding the Sovereign Order of Malta signed with the **University of Peace (UPEACE)**. With the cooperation of UNHCR and IOM, we shall organize training courses on human trafficking, online and in person.
 - Last December (2023), the Order of Malta signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Pontifical Gregorian University** for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons, to prevent abuse of minors and vulnerable persons, encouraging the implementation of good practices and raising awareness around safeguarding issues. Present for the Order of Malta was the Grand Hospitaller, Fra' Alessandro de Franciscis: *"The agreement signed today is the starting point of a comprehensive programme of initiatives of listening to and of training our members, volunteers and employees, to safeguard those we assist all minors and vulnerable people."*
- **Organizing 39 webinars on best practices** to prevent and combat human trafficking (www.adlaudatosi.org) with subtitles in seven languages (Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) with leading international specialists (www.adlaudatosi.org)
- **Collecting best practices on a website** (www.christusliberat.org) to assist survivors to empower themselves, through a platform to share their stories and insights and engage themselves in support of other survivors)
- Finally, **praying for potential victims, survivors and helpers, and for the conversion of traffickers.** The next public opportunity shall be the World Day of Prayer against Human Trafficking, the 8th of February, the Feast of Saint Bakhita, Patron Saint of modern slaves.

The Order of Malta needs to cooperate with Governments and international organisations.

In addition to today, one month ago, in Geneva, we organized an event on "Refugee Protection and Human Trafficking" in the framework of the Global Refugee Forum, with Caritas Internationalis, UNHCR, the Special on Human Trafficking, alongside with the co-sponsorship of the Permanent



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

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

Missions of Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, France, the Holy See and Switzerland, as well as UNODC.

We need to acknowledge and learn from what others are doing. Allow me to quote the conclusion of a recently published report (September 2023) of the World Health Organization European Region **Addressing human trafficking through health systems:** *“Member States and their health systems can play a crucial role in responding to and preventing labour and sex trafficking. Health systems are uniquely situated to identify, treat, and protect trafficked people and those most at risk of future trafficking. They are also able to provide thoughtful leadership in intersectoral anti-trafficking programmes”.*

In conclusion It is **cooperation between all stakeholders** that is needed to effectively prevent, protect, and rehabilitate victims and survivors. Training is essential if governments, civil society, and all stakeholders are to become aware of and able to implement the legal, political, economic, and social instruments needed to combat the scourge of human trafficking, and, for the second time in history, undertake to eradicate slavery.

We need more resources, more material, and more people, so that we may be able to effectively eradicate modern slavery from our world.

Together we can abolish modern slavery involving all actors: Governments and International Organisations, Religious Congregations, Businesses and Media, Research and Training without forgetting victims and survivors.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support and remain at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Feel free to approach me so that we may be able to collaborate in the future.

Thank you for your attention.