

## Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Arab States Marks the World Day against Trafficking in Persons - “Victims’ Voices Lead the Way”

30 July 2021 -

On the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons (WDATIP), the Regional UN Network on Migration for the Arab States calls on States in the region to take urgent action to combat trafficking in persons and identify, protect, and assist victims of human trafficking, consistent with commitments in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). WDATIP comes as the world reflects upon the third decade of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (the ‘Convention’), and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the ‘Protocol’).

According to the 2020 UNODC GLOTiP report, migrants and refugees make up 60 per cent of identified trafficked persons in the Middle East. Migration can function as a risk factor when traffickers use individuals’ migration status to exert control over them and stop them from seeking assistance or reporting abuse. Migrants may be vulnerable to trafficking in persons, including migrants who have regular status, and while globally the documented cases of trafficking are disproportionately borne by women and children, countries in the Middle East and North Africa have reported identifying more adult men than other victims of trafficking, underscoring the need for human rights-based approaches to migration governance. The number of cases has increased in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In breaking their silence, trafficking survivors must be at the heart of the efforts by the international community to prevent human trafficking and support trafficked persons. Listening to and learning from victims of trafficking is crucial in enhancing effective measures to prevent the crime, identify and support victims, and provide assistance for the benefit of their rehabilitation back into their families, societies, and communities. Thus, the observing of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons spotlights their journeys, their resilience, their voices, and contributions toward counter-trafficking initiatives.

Human trafficking is an abhorrent crime and human rights violation. At the national level, many countries have adopted legislation criminalizing and penalizing human trafficking as a serious offence, this is often coupled with the adoption of national referral mechanisms that regulate and institutionalize identification, protection, and assistance of vulnerable migrants. At the international level, in addition to the Convention and the Protocol and international labor and human rights standards, GCM actionable commitments are provided in the objectives, especially its Objective 10, in which States committed to enhance the identification and protection of, and provide assistance to migrants who have become victims of trafficking, paying particular attention to women and children.

The GCM places people-centered guiding principles at its core, recognizing that action on migration must promote the well-being of migrants and the members of communities in countries of origin, transit, and destination. The Regional UN Network assists Member States as they work to realize the GCM objectives in the Arab region, inclusive of adopting and implementing rights-based counter-trafficking policies;

examining and assessing the effectiveness of state-led counter-trafficking initiatives and exchanging best practices and lessons learned through the GCM Regional Reviews.

The Regional UN Network is also working to engage relevant stakeholders and promoting a whole-of-society approach to prevent, combat, and eradicate human trafficking, including in the context of migration, and to build awareness of the GCM. The UN Network will continue to advocate legislative and other counter-trafficking measures, support the strengthening of capacities and international cooperation to identify victims, including those with international protection needs, facilitate their access to protection and assistance, as well as, investigate, prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons, ultimately to discourage the demand that fosters exploitation leading to trafficking, and ending impunity of criminal trafficking networks.

Through implementing the whole of the GCM, including by improving the rule of law, increasing pathways for safe and regular migration, facilitating fair and ethical recruitment and safeguarding conditions that ensure decent work, enhancing protection through direct assistance to migrants in situations of vulnerability, and facilitating access to justice and remedies, the Member States of the region can work to prevent trafficking at the national and regional level.

In doing so, the voices of survivors must also continue to be heard to guide our efforts in combatting human trafficking.

Please contact Ms Kristina Mejo of IOM at [kmejo@iom.int](mailto:kmejo@iom.int), and Ms Sara Salman of ESCWA at [salmans@un.org](mailto:salmans@un.org)

## Further Information

---

A series of short multimedia stories featuring human trafficking survivors will illustrate the impact of survivor engagement and the need for victim empowerment. Each story will include interviews with survivors who talk about their motivation to engage in anti-trafficking efforts and will showcase their successful activities.

The stories will be complemented by a related social media package, which will also include facts from the latest [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#).

We encourage everyone, Member States, NGOs, all our partners, and stakeholders alike to join this year's campaign on the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

The social media package and all campaign materials is made available by [IOM](#) and [UNODC](#).

Key resources include: [UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children](#), [Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration](#), [Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking](#).