

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Human Trafficking and Human Rights

**Co-organizers:** Sovereign Order of Malta and Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

**Co-Sponsors:** PM of the Sovereign Order of Malta; CUHD

**Date:** Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Duration:** 2h, from 10 to 12 p.m. (CEST)

**Location:** Conference Room at 1 Varembe, Geneva

#### Introduction:

Human trafficking involves recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving people for the purpose of exploitation, whether through force, coercion, fraud, or some other form of deception. It is a form of modern-day slavery, a scourge that affects every region of the world. Human Trafficking is a grave violation of human rights, affecting more than 50 million individuals worldwide. However, since human trafficking is a hidden crime and its definition is challenging, estimating its scale is difficult. A number of the practices associated with human trafficking are prohibited under international human rights law, including slavery, servitude, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and enforced prostitution. Target 8.7 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals calls for states to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery.<sup>1</sup>

Victims of human trafficking often face multiple forms of abuse, exploitation, and trauma. Victims may be trafficked within a country or across the border for various purposes, including forced and exploitative labor in factories, farms, and private households, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and organ removal. Twenty-three years after the Palermo Protocol (United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women, and Children<sup>2</sup>), the scourge of human trafficking is far from being defeated. The Protocol provides an agreed definition of the term: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs”. Article 5 of the Protocol requires States to criminalize trafficking, attempted trafficking, and any other intentional participation or organization in a trafficking scheme. However, gaps still exist in the implementation. Although the Palermo Protocol calls for a comprehensive approach to combat trafficking, this approach has not been fully realized.

In light of the numerous human rights violations resulting from human trafficking, as well as the universal nature of human rights, victims of trafficking are entitled to the full spectrum of human rights, irrespective of their gender, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, or any other distinctions, the Permanent Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta and the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue are organizing a panel event on this major issue, on 30 November 2023 in Geneva. By increasing awareness among the international community, the panel event hopes to combat this aggravating global issue.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8637135/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons> (2000)

## Objectives:

- **Inform and Educate:** Provide accurate and up-to-date information about the different forms of contemporary slavery, including forced labor, human trafficking, child exploitation, and all other contemporary forms of slavery.
- **Challenge Perceptions:** Address misconceptions and stereotypes that hinder a comprehensive understanding of contemporary slavery, emphasizing its global nature and its presence even in seemingly developed nations.
- **Empower Individuals:** Equip individuals with the knowledge to identify signs of contemporary slavery, enabling them to take action by reporting suspicious activities and advocating for victims' rights.
- **Advocate for Policy Change:** Create a platform for advocating policy changes at local, national, and international levels to strengthen anti-slavery laws and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration among NGOs, governments, businesses, religious congregations, and civil society to pool resources and efforts to combat contemporary slavery effectively.

The panel event will raise awareness to encompass various components such as:

- **Digital Outreach:** use social media platforms, website content, and blog posts to share stories of survivors, provide informative content, and highlight successful efforts in combating contemporary slavery). The Sovereign Order of Malta is committed to raising awareness by giving [online free courses](#) in 4 languages.
- **Awareness Events:** organize seminars, webinars, and workshops involving experts, activists, and survivors to discuss the different facets of contemporary slavery, its impact on society, and possible solutions. The Sovereign Order of Malta regularly makes webinars and events on human trafficking that can easily be watched on [our websites](#).
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with International Organizations, Governments, civil societies, Academia, businesses, local communities, religious congregations, and NGOs to amplify the campaign's reach and impact, and above all, include survivors.
- **Creative Content:** Develop visually engaging content such as infographics, videos, and podcasts to effectively communicate the complexity of contemporary slavery and make it accessible to a wider audience, especially the youngest.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster local engagement through grassroots activities, educational sessions in schools, and community discussions to ensure that the message reaches diverse segments of society. Religious communities could have a fundamental role.

## Proposed Agenda

1. **Prof. Michel Veuthey (Moderator)**, *Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons*, Introduction
2. **Dr. Umesh Palwankar (Opening Remarks)**, *Executive Director*, Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue
3. **Mgr. Robert J. Vitillo**, *Secretary General*, ICMC,
4. **Claudio Delfabro**, Director of the Department of International Refugee Law and Migration Law, International Institute of Humanitarian Law, TBC
5. **Paola Fudakowska**, Legal Consultant, TRIAL International
6. **Ena Lucia Mariaca Pacheco**, Co-Founder and Global Ambassador, U.S Council on Violence against Men and Boys
7. **Alisa Gbiorczyk**, International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC), Member, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and CER & Founder, CYBER NITELWATCH

Debate with participants and wrap up by the moderator (30 min.)

Geneva, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023