

OFFICE OF THE OSCE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND CO-ORDINATOR FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

2020 REPORT UPDATE

“It is precisely when our global community is convulsed by a health and economic crisis of this magnitude that our obligation to combat the exploitation of vulnerable people becomes most acute.”

Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, in his statement on the need to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts in a time of crisis

Trafficking in human beings continues to plague the entire OSCE region, manifesting in many forms and affecting an ever-increasing number of victims.

Trafficking is a symptom of structural inequalities in our societies, particularly economic and gender inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these factors and presented new opportunities for perpetrators of trafficking in human beings. Although challenging economic conditions contributed to human trafficking long before the pandemic started, the COVID-19 crisis has forced millions into positions of heightened vulnerability, and therefore at greater risk of trafficking.

This is not a time to turn away from combating trafficking, but instead a time to invest in its eradication. In response to the

outbreak of the pandemic, the Special Representative issued a statement urging authorities to prioritize anti-trafficking efforts in order to prevent the health and economic crisis from becoming a human trafficking crisis. Following the statement, the Special Representative issued a series of concrete recommendations on responses to COVID-19, focusing on preventative measures and on how to keep protection services and criminal justice systems functioning.

Building on these actions, in 2020 the OSR/CTHB enhanced its support to OSCE participating States’ anti-trafficking efforts through a wide range of activities including awareness raising, policy development, research, and capacity building.

From Policy to Practice

Within the OSCE’s framework of “Prosecution, Protection, Prevention and Partnerships,” our approach is based on a cycle involving the examination of persistent and emerging challenges, development of comprehensive policy responses, and delivery of support

to anti-trafficking practitioners for practical implementation on the ground. This is our “policy to practice” approach, which we implement across a number of priority areas for OSCE participating States where we believe we can deliver the greatest impact.

2020 | A YEAR IN REVIEW

This year, the OSR/CTHB advanced the OSCE's anti-trafficking efforts through

Awareness raising and tailored assistance through official visits to:

- Ireland
- Italy
- Finland
- Holy See
- Turkey



OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mr. Valiant Richey, during the meeting with the National Women's Council, National Observatory on Violence against Women, Ireland, 20 February 2020. (OSCE)

Follow up on last year's visits with finalization of reports on:

- Tajikistan
- Georgia
- Croatia

Research and Publications:

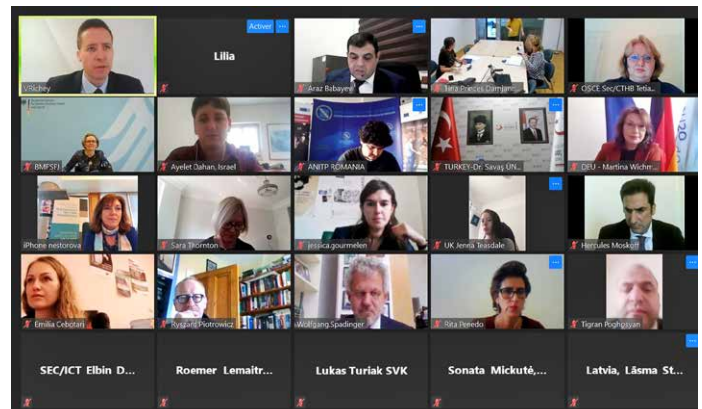
- Leveraging innovation to fight trafficking in human beings: a comprehensive analysis of **technology tools**
- Compendium of relevant reference materials and resources on ethical sourcing and **prevention of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation** in supply chains: Second updated edition
- Analysis of **procurement data** for the risk of trafficking in human beings – Pilot project for the OSCE Mission to Serbia
- Establishing National Focal Points to protect **child victims of trafficking** in human beings
- Highlights of the Expert Meeting on combating trafficking in human beings for the **removal of organs**
- Highlights of the **20th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons**

Capacity Building

- In collaboration with the International Association of Prosecutors, organized a Global Webinar series for criminal justice professionals on victim-centered, trauma-informed, and human rights-based approaches to the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking
- Supported participating States in setting up national simulation-based trainings, using OSR/CTHB's experiential learning methodology
- Organized two Capacity-Building Expert meetings to identify shortcomings and training gaps in the area of investigating and prosecuting THB-related crimes across the OSCE region

Partnerships and Co-ordination

- Organized the annual meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs together with the Council of Europe
- Hosted the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons and its Expert Co-ordination Team Meetings
- For the second consecutive year, together with UN Women, the OSR/CTHB co-chaired ICAT, the UN's Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking
- Actively contributed to other regional anti-trafficking efforts, including with the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- Enhanced our partnerships with the private sector, co-authoring the paper on technology and trafficking together with Tech Against Trafficking
- Established new partnerships with International Association of Prosecutors, International Association of Judges, International Organization for Judiciary Training, and European Judiciary Training Network



Leaders of anti-trafficking efforts from over 50 countries across the OSCE region participating in the annual joint OSCE-Council of Europe meeting, 4 November 2020. (OSCE)

“In recent years, we have registered a sharp decline in already low numbers of prosecutions. Exploitation violates the dignity of those who suffer it, creates trauma that can last a lifetime, and frays the fabric of our communities. What are we saying about justice when 99% of victims never see it?”

In 2020, the OSR/CTHB further developed core programmes around areas of greatest need: prosecution through enhancing political will and improved capacity building; protection through trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches; prevention through measures in public procurement and supply chains, and the use of technology.



Executive Director of UNODC Ghada Wali (l), Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council Ambassador Igli Hasani (r) and the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey addressing the opening of the 20th Alliance Conference, Vienna, 20 July 2020. (OSCE/Micky Kroell)

Prosecution

In 2020, the OSR/CTHB launched a series of initiatives to assist OSCE participating States in countering the impunity of perpetrators by enhancing prosecutions across the OSCE area. The Alliance Conference held in July 2020 gathered more than 800 participants from nearly all OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, and emphasized:

- The need for specialized prosecutors and specialized police units, as well as the importance of multi-agency co-operation and joint investigation teams
- The importance of investigative techniques to carry out “victimless prosecutions” relying on evidence gathered using financial investigations and technological tools
- The need to offer regular, specialized, and sustainable training programmes for law enforcement units across sectors, as well as training of judges and prosecutors, in order to ensure protection of victim rights, consistent application of law, and appropriate sentences based on the seriousness of the crime
- The importance of supporting victims during all criminal justice proceedings

Finally, the Alliance encouraged all participating States to strengthen their efforts on prosecution and to set a concrete goal of tripling the number of prosecutions within the next three years.

Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, addressing the OSCE Permanent Council

Protection

Identifying victims and ensuring their access to services is a core priority for the OSCE, including the promotion of trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches. This year, the OSR/CTHB assisted the OSCE Participating States with guidance on how to prevent child trafficking through cross-border information sharing, with the ultimate goal to develop effective multi-lateral co-operation to assist child victims of trafficking.

The OSR/CTHB also organized an expert meeting with the OHCHR and the WHO on trafficking in human beings for the removal of organs, publishing a set of insightful and concrete recommendations for anti-trafficking and health-care policy makers and practitioners.

Prevention

A central focus in the area of prevention remains the identification and promotion of practices that decrease the demand for goods and services produced by trafficking victims. Building upon the success of the project to prevent trafficking in human beings in supply chains and promoting better procurement practices across the public and private sectors, the OSCE continued “leading by example” by improving its own procurement practices and collaborating with ICAT and the United Nations to promote adoption and implementation of preventative measures in international organizations.

Similarly, the OSR/CTHB undertook research on the international legal framework and good practices to reduce and disrupt the demand that fosters trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Technology and Trafficking

This year, the OSR/CTHB and Tech Against Trafficking, a coalition of global technology companies, published the ground-breaking research *Leveraging innovation to fight trafficking in human beings: a comprehensive analysis of technology tools*. The publication conducted a global analysis of how different stakeholders, including law enforcement, civil society, businesses, and academia, can take advantage of technology to advance the fight against human trafficking. It identified and analyzed more than 300 technology initiatives, while also addressing ethical considerations, data protection issues and the need to respect human rights in the use of technology.



LOOKING AHEAD | 2021

1. Stronger Prevention

While prosecution and protection are fundamental components of our efforts to combat this crime, ending human trafficking is contingent on the resources and attention devoted to its prevention. As enshrined in the Palermo Protocol and OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions, discouraging demand that fosters all forms of exploitation leading to trafficking is a fundamental component of a holistic and effective anti-trafficking strategy. In 2021, the Office will continue to strengthen its work around prevention of labour exploitation in supply chains. In addition, the OSR/CTHB will publish comprehensive research on the demand that fuels trafficking for sexual exploitation, which remains the predominant form of human trafficking globally as well as in the OSCE area.

2. Capacity building

In 2021, the OSR/CTHB will continue expanding its capacity-building support to participating States. In particular, the Office will support national simulation-based trainings planned in Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine as well as a regional simulation-based training in Greece. Furthermore, the OSR/CTHB will organize a new international simulation-based training on combating trafficking along migration routes, with a view to enhance impact and sustainability at the national level. In line with its 'policy to practice' approach, the Office will also bring its research into practice with capacity-building initiatives to prevent the misuse of technology for trafficking purposes and a pilot project on financial investigations developed together with Cyprus.

3. Partnerships and Country Visits

Country visits are one of the most effective tools the OSR/CTHB has to support Participating States in their anti-trafficking efforts.

In response to COVID-19-related travel restrictions, the OSR/CTHB has developed new ways to engage with national authorities and will continue likewise in 2021. These visits offer a unique opportunity to discuss pressing issues, provide advice and expertise, exchange good practices, and consult relevant legislative, judicial, and executive authorities in a spirit of co-operation, as well as to raise the political profile of anti-trafficking efforts in any given country.

4. Publications to be launched

In early 2021, the OSR/CTHB will publish its research on gender-sensitive approaches to trafficking with the aim to assist participating States in addressing victims' specific protection needs, including male victims. The Office will also launch its publication on "Trafficking in Human Beings and Terrorism", which analyses the legal and policy frameworks around human trafficking and terrorism and compares the policy and practical measures available to prevent and combat both phenomena and to protect victims.

5. New research areas

Finally, the OSR/CTHB will expand its research activities on new thematic areas, starting from the nexus between trafficking in human beings and national minorities. The Office will also work on policy recommendations to combat technology-facilitated trafficking and develop policy recommendations on the state-led "social path" for identification of victims of human trafficking, which will help ensure that the identification and support provided to victims is separated from criminal justice processes.

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