

Modern-day Slavery:

Important Information About Trafficking in Persons

What is trafficking in persons?

- Trafficking in persons is the illegal trade in human beings, through abduction, the use or threat of force, deception, fraud or “sale” for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor. This horrific human rights violation is modern-day slavery.
- 600,000 – 800,000 people are trafficked internationally every year.
- **Each year 14,500 to 17,500 trafficking victims end up in slavery right here in the United States.**
- **Most are women and children.**
- **Trafficking victims have been found in cities and rural areas all across America.**
- People are lured from countries with high rates of poverty and violence in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America and tricked into believing better opportunities await them in the U.S. and other destination countries. Once there, instead of finding opportunity, they are held in slavery-like conditions, imprisoned, raped, beaten, starved, and forced into prostitution, domestic service, and forced labor.
- Much like drug trafficking, trafficking in persons is a multinational, organized criminal industry that generates billions of dollars a year.
- A person who has been trafficked is considered a victim of a serious crime under U.S. law and has the right to protection and assistance under the *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000* and its *Reauthorization of 2003* and *2005*. This law provides for the protection of victims in the U.S., including medical care and shelter services.

How can I recognize a person who has been trafficked?

- There is no single way to identify a victim of trafficking. Trafficking is mainly a hidden problem, although many trafficking victims are in plain sight. The women and girls who are trafficked are often kept isolated and away from people who might be able to help them. If they are allowed to go out, their travel or activities may be restricted and they typically are watched, escorted, or guarded by associates of the traffickers. Traffickers may “coach” them to answer questions with a cover story about being a student or tourist.
- Trafficking victims may be found in a range of activities. Many are tricked or forced into prostitution or other illicit sexual activity. Others are forced to work in restaurants, agriculture, hotels and domestic service.
- Trafficking victims are often raped, beaten, imprisoned, tortured, and made to live in life-threatening conditions. They and their families back home are often threatened with death if they try to escape to safety. Trafficking victims live in fear and often will not initially acknowledge that they have been held in slavery-like conditions or how they have received their injuries.
- Trafficking victims often do not have their passports or other travel or immigration documents, because their abductors have confiscated them. Trafficking victims also rarely have access to means of communications such as phones.
- Trafficking victims may be found in any community across the United States.

How do I report a suspected case of trafficking?

- Trafficking is a violent crime and trafficking victims desperately need help from others to obtain their freedom and begin recovery.
- **If you know of a possible case of trafficking, contact the U.S. Department of Justice Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force complaint line toll-free at 1-888-428-7581.**
- Callers to this line can receive referrals for services to which trafficking victims are entitled under U.S. law. Calling this line can also start the process of finding and prosecuting the criminal traffickers.

What else can I do to help a trafficking victim?

- Learn more about trafficking in persons. One way is by signing up for the **Vital Voices Trafficking Alert** – an electronic newsletter that highlights anti-trafficking developments in the U.S. and around the world. To sign up, visit: www.vitalvoices.org/traffalrt.htm.
- Learn more about the nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. providing direct services to trafficking victims. These include:

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| Los Angeles, CA: | Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking: www.castla.org |
| New York City, NY: | Safe Horizon: www.safehorizon.org |
| Honolulu, HI: | Pacific Gateway Center: www.pacificgateway.org |
| Metro Washington DC: | Boat People S.O.S.: www.bpsos.org |
| Chicago, IL: | Heartland Alliance: www.heartlandalliance.org |
| Decatur, GA: | Refugee Women's Network: www.riwn.org |
| Anchorage, AK: | Catholic Social Services of Anchorage: www.cssalaska.org |
| Dallas, TX: | Mosaic Family Services: www.mosaicservices.org |

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE U.S. ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAW:

Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) & Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Acts of 2003 and 2005 (TVPA)

Every year, up to two million people, mostly **women and girls**, are trafficked and sold into modern slavery – including 14,500-17,500 who are brought to the U.S. alone. To combat this growing problem at home and abroad, the U.S. Congress passed the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*, which takes new steps to prevent trafficking, protect its victims, and prosecute those responsible for these crimes. In 2003 and 2005, Congress re-authorized the law to provide additional resources to combat trafficking in the U.S. and around the globe.

PROTECTION: New Help for Victims

- Temporary Residency. 5,000 victims of the worst forms of trafficking are now eligible for temporary residency (T-visas) in the U.S.
- New Assistance. Victims are now eligible for a broad range of benefits and services regardless of immigration status.
- Targeted Department of Justice Grants. Creates the first ever grants to fund NGOs that help provide services to victims of trafficking.
- Reintegration. Assists victims in returning home and allows victim family members come to the U.S. to rebuild their lives.
- Help and Safety While in Custody. Victims of trafficking who are in custody shall have access to shelter, medical care, information about their legal rights, translation services and other assistance. Information about these victims and their families will not be disclosed, and they will be otherwise protected from intimidation and retribution by traffickers.
- Allowing trafficking victims without T-Visas to remain in the U.S. Before any T-Visa assessment has been made, law enforcement officials may now keep trafficking victims in the U.S. if they are deemed as potential witnesses to crimes that law enforcement needs assistance with.
- New Training for Justice, Defense, Homeland Security, Labor and State Department personnel in how to identify and help trafficking victims.

PROSECUTION: Punishments that Fit the Crime.

- Establishes New Trafficking Crimes
- Increases Sentences. Convicted traffickers can serve up to 20 years or more
- Mandatory Restitution. Traffickers are now required to pay victims for their losses if the court rules favorably to the victims.
- Asset Forfeiture. Traffickers must forfeit their assets upon conviction.
- Holds Citizens Accountable Globally. U.S. military personnel, U.S. officials and contractors are held accountable for trafficking crimes committed abroad.
- Protects Witnesses. Trafficking victims are now eligible for the Witness Protection Program.

PREVENTION: Working with NGOs to Stop Trafficking before it Happens

- Annual Trafficking In Persons Report (TIP). The law requires an annual report by the Department of State on government anti-trafficking efforts, and allows economic sanctions for those that have significant problems and fail to address them.
- Increasing Economic Opportunity. New initiatives have been created to increase economic opportunity for potential trafficking victims so that they are not lured away from home with false promises of jobs in other communities, regions, and countries.
- Raising Awareness. Public awareness programs are encouraged to warn potential victims about how to avoid becoming victims.
- Expanding Research: Provides funding for addressing the links between HIV/AIDS and trafficking.
- Protecting High-Vulnerability Populations: Creates initiatives to prevent trafficking in post-conflict areas.
- Addressing Domestic Trafficking Issues: Provides additional anti-trafficking resources and funding for state and local authorities to address trafficking in American citizens and residents, especially trafficking of minors in the United States.

THE PRESIDENT'S INTERAGENCY ANTI-TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

- The President is required to establish a Cabinet-level task force. In addition, the Secretary of State is authorized to create an office, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, to support the task force and help coordinate anti-trafficking activities across the government.

NEW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Every year, the State Department is required to issue a report that includes a list of countries affected by trafficking, and an assessment of their efforts to combat trafficking. The Department of Justice is required to issue an annual report to assess US government's anti-trafficking efforts, including cases convicted, prosecuted, and victims assisted.

FUNDING

- The anti-trafficking law authorized \$361 million over 2006 and 2007 for domestic and international initiatives, contingent on Congressional funding.

SAY NO TO SLAVERY FORCED LABOR IS ILLEGAL

IT IS ILLEGAL TO FORCE YOU TO WORK OR ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO MAKE YOU WORK TO PAY OFF A DEBT.

IT IS ILLEGAL FOR SOMEONE TO TRAFFIC YOU AWAY FROM HOME IN ORDER TO ENSLAVE, TORTURE, OR MISTREAT YOU.

**IF YOU ARE BEING FORCED TO WORK OR HELD
AGAINST YOUR WILL, YOU CAN
GET HELP**

THERE ARE NEW LAWS THAT COULD HELP YOU, REGARDLESS OF YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS.

PLEASE CALL THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND WORKER EXPLOITATION COMPLAINT LINE, FREE OF CHARGE:

1-888-428-7581

OPERATORS CAN TALK TO YOU IN YOUR LANGUAGE



www.vitalvoices.org

A Global Partnership for Women

*Adapted from material created by the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Taskforce U.S.
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