

**The Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences and
the Fédération Internationale des Associations de Médecins Catholiques**

STATEMENT ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Vatican City, November 2013

***Human trafficking is the most extensive
form of slavery in this twenty-first century!***

Pope Francis, *Message of Easter 2013*

Each human being is a free person, whether man, woman, girl or boy, and is destined to exist for the good of others in equality and fraternity. A relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people – men, women, girls and boys – are equal and have the same freedom and dignity constitutes a grave crime against humanity.

Despite the efforts of many, trafficking in human beings, this most extensive form of slavery in our twenty-first century, is a daunting plague on a vast scale in many countries across the world. Victims are hidden away in private homes, in illegal establishments, in factories, on farms, behind closed doors, in families, houses and other places in the cities, villages and slums of the world's richest and poorest nations. The situation is not improving but is very probably getting worse.

There is now a compelling and absolute need to put an end to trafficking in human beings and all forms of exploitation, particularly prostitution, as well as the widespread dissemination of pornographic material, especially on the Internet.

Trafficking in human beings in all its forms, and in particular trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution, must be declared a crime against humanity. Traffickers must be prosecuted on the basis of clear international and national laws, including the confiscation of the profits derived from their illegal activities, and the victims must be fully compensated.

All stakeholders, at all levels, have a moral and legal duty to eradicate this most grave violation of human rights and to ensure that all human beings co-exist in freedom, equality, harmony and peace, according to the common values of our shared humanity. With the support of intellectuals, moral and religious leaders, good and just national and international institutions, and the power of a global movement of people, social networks and technologies, we can expose these hidden crimes – it is our moral imperative to make ours the last generation that has to fight the trade in human lives.

We suggest that:

The Holy See

- 1. Signs and ratifies the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.*
- 2. Signs and ratifies the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the 'Palermo Protocol').*
- 3. Signs and ratifies the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB).*
- 4. Engages the Permanent Missions of the Holy See in international organisations in insisting upon the urgency of a global strategy against trafficking in human beings.*
- 5. Encourages the ratification of the International Convention on Migrant Workers (18 December 1990) and the Domestic Workers Convention of the ILO (16 June 2011), including domestic workers and agricultural workers in national labour laws (the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace).*
- 6. In line with the illuminated magisterium of Benedict XVI, leads a movement to ensure that the commitment of the Catholic Church, and of men and women of good will, to stopping human trafficking and prostitution is implemented in the most decisive and clear way (Benedict XVI, Address to the New Ambassador of Germany, 7 November 2011).*

International organisations

- 7. Stress and highlight that the trafficking in human beings is first and foremost a severe form of human-rights violation.*
- 8. Include a specific objective to end trafficking in human beings in the new post-2015 Global Development Goals.*
- 9. Take action to reduce demand for all forms of exploitation, and especially sexual exploitation.*
- 10. Establish codes of conduct and specifically a policy of zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse.*

Governments and National Authorities

- 11. Prepare national action plans to address trafficking in human beings, including measures to avoid re-trafficking and safe return, in cooperation with civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations.*
- 12. Establish a national mechanism to address the prevention and combatting of trafficking in human beings and protect its victims.*
- 13. Ensure the necessary political, legal and financial support to the courts, the administrative offices and the security forces involved in action against trafficking in human beings at all levels.*

14. *Take urgent action to curb the demand that fuels all forms of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation, and criminalise the clients of prostitution to ensure action against sex trafficking.*
15. *Take urgent legal and policy action against prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation that affects predominantly women and girls and is intrinsically linked with legalised prostitution systems and the commercialisation of sex.*
16. *Ensure that businesses are sufficiently regulated and held accountable for abuses that occur.*
17. *Consider the key role of the Internet and especially pornography in facilitating the online recruitment of victims of trafficking in human beings and legislate against possible damage involved.*
18. *Introduce a compulsory system of birth registration.*
19. *Ensure the full confiscation of assets from criminals.*
20. *Ensure sufficient compensation to victims.*
21. *Focus on financial investigations, increased prosecutions and convictions for traffickers.*
22. *Ensure the training of all relevant actors and front-line officials in the work against trafficking in human beings.*
23. *Prioritise the eradication of child trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, and ensure the early identification of children who may be victims, and to this end consider innovative means such as the establishment of national DNA databases to identify and prevent child trafficking.*

Civil Society Organisations

24. *Ensure awareness campaigns concentrated specifically on different forms of exploitation, especially targeting the demand for sexual and labour exploitation.*
25. *Create networks of associations of professionals relevant to the work against trafficking in human beings and protecting and assisting its victims pro bono.*
26. *Create online resources to address this global phenomenon and take appropriate action.*

The Business Community

27. *Introduces strict codes of conduct and legislation on transparency for supply chains that are free of trafficked and other forms of enslaved labour.*
28. *Raises awareness on the serious risks and damage involved in the 'race to the bottom' to minimise labour costs, risks that exist per se, and due to the fact that they frequently derive from forced labour.*

Christians

29. *Ensure the effective and systematic involvement of Bishops' Conferences, bishops, clergy, Congregations, parishes, schools and media instruments in knowledge about, and actions against, trafficking in human beings.*
30. *Incorporate the subject of human trafficking into pastoral care in formation courses and create an advocacy community on such trafficking that is especially trained to dialogue with diplomatic communities, the business world, police/security forces and others on behalf of victims and vulnerable persons.*
31. *Create working groups on the topic of trafficking in human beings, focusing on concrete actions and preparing a position paper on key issues that could form the basis for future statements (by Church leaders).*
32. *Strengthen knowledge and support understanding and quality research as regards all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation.*

All Religions

33. *Strengthen inter-confessional and ecumenical networks locally, regionally and internationally in order to create an ever-growing pool of resources to help victims.*
34. *Provide access for local churches and other faith groups to training and resources to promote an appropriate community-level response in all activities connected with trafficking in human beings.*
35. *Educate people on the phenomenon and scale of trafficking in human beings and stress that this is a most grave form of human-rights violation.*
36. *Give victims access to monasteries, convents and religious houses.*
37. *Support consumer awareness campaigns to inform people about the reality of human trafficking supply chains and about the need for human trafficking-free supply chains at the global level.*
38. *Coordinate the work against trafficking in human beings by all faith-based organisations and ensure the active participation of nuncios, religious representatives and diplomats.*
39. *Establish a World Day of prayer, fasting, action, and reflection on trafficking in human beings.*
40. *Reach out to all people, women, men, girls, and boys, and raise awareness on their moral duty to refrain from any activities, including engagement in the sex industry, that fuel trafficking in human beings.*
41. *As a first outcome of this workshop, it was agreed that a permanent coordination between actors on the ground against human trafficking will be established through a website, in order to create a « network of networks » allowing better, accurate information, sharing of experience and facilitation of joint initiatives, demarches or projects for all those who want to place the victims at the core of their action.*