

March 7, 2023

His Excellency Antonio Guterres
Secretary General
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017
Re: United Nations General Assembly 2023

Dear Secretary Guterres:

We are writing to request that the focus of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) on September 5, 2023 be *Combating Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery*. As you are aware, human trafficking is one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, enslaving millions of people through sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, forced marriage, and other forms of modern slavery. There are currently more human trafficking victims in the world now than at any other time in history, and this number is growing.

Human trafficking is a crime that impacts every nation in the world and deprives people of their most basic rights and freedoms while stripping them of their dignity and worth. It is also the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, generating more than \$150 billion annually and serving as a significant source of funding for dictatorships and movements that threaten the stability and security of the world¹. Further, terrorist groups like Boko Haram and ISIS profit from systemic human trafficking abuses. Other examples in recent years include state-sponsored labor trafficking and children sold as sex slaves.

Human trafficking is unique among human rights abuses in that local and regional escalation not only exploits millions of people in bonded labor, sexual exploitation, organ harvesting, forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery, but it also funds and exacerbates global violence, including terrorism, armed conflict, religious persecution, gender apartheid, and environmental degradation. We can no longer ignore the connection between local and regional exploitation, global security crises, and human trafficking trends.

On a positive note, ending human trafficking helps to fulfill crucial parts of multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)². Additionally, human trafficking is a human rights violation that elicits broad engagement across ideological divides, and so stands as a uniquely unifying platform for global human rights deliberations. Thus, we urge you to consider making human trafficking the focus of UNGA 78. Through global awareness, cooperation, and collaboration, there is hope that we can bring an end to this horrendous evil. Thank you for your consideration of our letter, and we look forward to your response.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang--en/index.htm

² [SDGs \(unodc.org\)](https://unodc.org)

Sincerely,

Naheed Farid MP (ret.) – Afghanistan
Mohammad Mahdi Rasikh MP (ret.) - Afghanistan
Shahkhan Sherzad MP (ret.) – Afghanistan
Fatmir Mediu MP – Albania
Alika Kinan – US TIP Hero Award Recipient, Lived Experience Expert - Argentina
Karen Andrews MP - Australia
Senator Linda Reynolds – Australia
Betty Yaniquez MP - Bolivia
Agho Bamenju MP – Cameroon
Ziad Aboultaif MP - Canada
Rachael Thomas MP – Canada
Arnold Viersen MP – Canada
Olivier Vamy MP – Cote d’Ivoire
Deputy National Luabeya Nadine Mangabu – Democratic Republic of the Congo
Kapand Rohani Bosco, Conseiller Diplomatique du Sénat – Democratic Republic of the Congo
Rushan Abbas, Lived Experience Expert – East Turkistan
Jaak Madison MEP – European Parliament, Estonia
Kuric Aina MP (ret.) – France
Aide Amadou MP (ret.) – France
Senator Helene Conway-Mouret - France
Senator Olivier Cadic - France
Sonia Krimi MP (ret.) – France
Jurgen Hardt MP – Germany
Frank Heinrich MP (ret.) – Germany
Acora Odonga MP – Ghana
Davis Opoku MP – Ghana
Sandy Recinos, Secretary of Trafficking – Guatemala
Achyuta Samanta MP – India
Arbenita Mjekiqi, Presidential Advisor on European Integration - Kosovo
President Behgjet Pacolli (ret.), current MP - Kosovo
Shiqpe Selimi MP – Kosovo
Rihards Kols MP – Latvia
Emanuelis Zingeris MP - Lithuania
Congresswoman Rosi Orozco (ret.) – Mexico
Vladimir Gjorchev MP (ret.) – North Macedonia
Rebecca Sharibu – Lived Experience Expert – Nigeria
Secretary General Jonathan Riggs – Panama
Flor Gonzales MP – Philippines
Krzysztof Gawkowski MP - Poland

Katarzyna Kretkowska MP – Poland
Cristian-Tudor Bacanu MP – Romania
Rozalia Biro MP – Romania
Andi-Gabriel Grosaru MP – Romania
Pavel Popescu MP – Romania
Igor Becic MP (ret.) - Serbia
Ambassador Vladimir Bozovic – Serbia
Vladimir Marinkovic, Deputy Speaker of Parliament (ret.) – Serbia
Ilija Zivotic MP - Serbia
Sahr Charles MP – Sierra Leone
Sheku Munir Turay MP – Sierra Leone
Deputy Victor Gonzalez - Spain
Senator Francisco Javier Marquez Sanchez – Spain
Bol Gai Deng, President – South Sudan government in exile
Kensenhuis Patrick MP – Suriname
Ambassador Volodymyr Arieu - Ukraine
Karen Bradley MP - UK
Hon. Kevin Hyland, former Anti-Slavery Commissioner – UK
Pauline Neville-Jones, Baroness House of Lords – UK
Anne Basham – Parliamentary Task Force on Human Trafficking, Chair - USA
Hon. Tanya Gould – Virginia Anti-Human Trafficking Director, Lived Experience Expert - USA
Dr. Ekaterina Khostioukina – Lived Experience Expert – USA
Congressman Burgess Owens - USA
Congressman Robert Pittenger (ret.) – USA
Senator Larry Pressler (ret.) – USA
Ambassador-at-Large to Combat Trafficking in Persons John Cotton Richmond (ret.) - USA