



United States Mission to the OSCE

Session 15: Focus on identification, assistance and access to justice for the victims of trafficking (cont.)

As prepared for delivery by, Ronald MacNamara, U.S. Helsinki Commission,
to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, October 8, 2008

Mr./Madam Moderator,

The United States Congress continues to work on further refinements to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which has become an example of a victim-centered approach to trafficking, incorporating both proactive victim protection and assistance provisions. The United States continues to seek an increasingly sophisticated balance of victims' rights and efforts to prosecute the perpetrators of human trafficking. Victims' rights must remain the utmost priority, and assistance for those victims should encourage self-identification and cooperation with law enforcement to end the cycle of exploitation for other victims.

The Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) issued by the United States continues to raise awareness of the global persistence of human trafficking. It continues to be our hope that this document will maintain an ongoing record of the state of anti-trafficking efforts around the world and inspire significant action where deficiencies exist. To this end, a number of developments have occurred with regard to countries in need of further policy development and implementation identified by our delegation at last year's HDIM.

Notable improvements reported in the 2008 TIP Report include those of Croatia and Macedonia, which now fully comply with the minimum standards to combat trafficking. These countries have shown significant increases in their efforts to pursue comprehensive victim-centered responses to trafficking. The challenge that remains is adequate funding to improve their effectiveness. Belarus too showed notable improvements.

Some other encouraging improvements since last year include increasing support for the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We commend states such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and OSCE Asian Partner for Cooperation Mongolia for becoming parties to this Protocol and also developing legislation to promote international cooperation for the effective prosecution of traffickers. This is an important first step toward fundamental cooperation. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also enacted other complementary reforms, which have improved the anti-trafficking performance. We call on states that have not yet done so to ratify this important protocol.

Unfortunately, some OSCE participating States which are source and transit countries have not improved their anti-trafficking efforts. Albania and Azerbaijan failed to provide evidence of improvements in victim protection and law enforcement training. Increasing efforts to train law

enforcement and other entities in victim identification, as well as effectively referring identified victims to appropriate assistance and services would accomplish a great deal in these countries.

In some destination countries such as Montenegro, diminishing public attention, lack of vigorous law enforcement efforts, and a lack of comprehensive legislation to improve international cooperation has hindered the effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts. An increase in law enforcement activity to disrupt trafficking channels and better coordinated victim protection efforts would significantly improve the situation in these countries.