



United States Mission to the OSCE

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 29, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The U.S. Mission to the OSCE joins the United Nations, participating States, and communities and nongovernmental organizations around the world in commemorating July 30 as *World Day against Trafficking in Persons*.

This year’s theme for the *World Day against Trafficking in Persons*, “Victims’ Voices Lead the Way,” honors those who were subjected to human trafficking, with an emphasis on supporting, listening, and learning from those who survived this heinous crime.

We celebrate the efforts of survivors, who demonstrate extraordinary resilience and reaffirm the need to employ a trauma- and survivor-informed approach. Survivors’ engagement continues to be a policy priority and central tenet of the United States’ approach to combating human trafficking.

In the United States, the *Advisory Council on Human Trafficking*, which is made up of human trafficking survivors appointed by the President, provides a formal platform to help shape federal anti-trafficking policies. Insight and guidance from survivors bolsters and strengthens the U.S. government’s efforts to end human trafficking.

We encourage OSCE participating States to incorporate survivors’ input into their anti-trafficking policies and measures to combat this scourge. We applaud the *International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC)* launched by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) earlier this year. ISTAC provides the OSCE and its participating States with a unique and valuable mechanism to engage survivors as we strengthen the OSCE’s anti-trafficking efforts. Incorporating survivor input into anti-trafficking policies and programs supports a truly victim-centered and trauma-informed approach.

The United States looks forward to tomorrow’s event, “Ensuring Inclusion of Victims and Survivors’ Voices in All Anti-Trafficking Efforts,” co-organized by ODIHR, the *Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT)*, and *Apne Aap Women Worldwide*, and featuring guidance and recommendations of ISTAC. The remarkable survivors who lead ISTAC demonstrate the importance of sustaining participating States’ collective commitment to ending human trafficking in our OSCE region and worldwide, and doing so inclusively, while applying a victim-centered, trauma- and survivor-informed approach. Let us learn from and engage meaningfully with survivors and combat human trafficking in all its forms.

The United States continues to believe gaps remain in our strong *acquis*, and we are ready to support a targeted Ministerial decision this year to further strengthen our ability to combat human trafficking.

However, we need the help of all participating States to work collaboratively to resolve the impasse that undermined our collective efforts for the past two consecutive years on draft decisions related to anti-trafficking. We urge participating States to reach consensus this year on mutually acceptable language and help us usher a draft decision to its successful adoption, thereby reaffirming the OSCE's leading role in combating human trafficking.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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