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INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC POLICY

The world is confronted today by a scourge that impacts each and every one of us: young and old, male and female, believer and unbeliever. We are accosted by the consequences of a global sin each one of us commits either by our actions or by our inactions. This great sin is the crime of trafficking in persons.

Human trafficking is slavery, and is one of the greatest challenges facing national governments, international organizations, religious organizations, and all of global society. Trafficking is a \$9 billion industry, the third largest source of income for organized crime and the second fastest growing criminal activity in the world, equal with illegal arms sales.

Of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children trafficked across international borders each year, approximately 80 percent are women and girls, and up to 50 percent are minors. The data also demonstrates that the majority of transnational victims are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. With a focus on transnational trafficking in persons, however, these numbers do not include millions of victims around the world who are trafficked within their own national borders.

As the United States 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report states, “The alarming trafficking of people for purposes of slave labor, often in their own countries. This is a form of human trafficking that can be harder to identify and estimate than sex trafficking, yet it may be much greater in size when we count domestic trafficking. It does not necessarily involve the same criminal networks profiting from transnational trafficking for sexual exploitation. More often, individuals are guilty of, for example, enslaving one domestic servant or hundreds of unpaid, forced workers at a factory.”

Although victims of sex trafficking experience a grotesque range of health problems, the global public health impact of sex trafficking has not been quantified. Reviewing regional studies offers a sense of how physically and psychologically traumatizing sex trafficking is. In a study of women trafficked to the European Union, health impacts included extreme violence that resulted in broken bones, loss of consciousness, and gang rape. Complications related to abortions, gastrointestinal problems, unhealthy weight loss, lice, suicidal depression, alcoholism, and drug addiction were also reported. Another study of women trafficked to the European Union found that 95% of victims had been violently assaulted or coerced into a sexual act, and over 60% of victims reported fatigue, neurological symptoms, gastrointestinal problems, back pain, vaginal discharges, and gynecological infections. Less obvious health consequences of sex trafficking can include cervical cancer, caused by the human papilloma virus, which is more common among women who have sexual encounters with many men.

States bear the greatest responsibility for combating this unthinkable crime. From law enforcement to prosecution, states **MUST** draft, develop, advance, and enforce laws and fundamental rights, pursue prosecution of perpetrators, and fully carry out the war against human trafficking

In the past four years, twice as many people in the United States have been prosecuted and convicted for trafficking than in the prior four-year period. Worldwide, more than 3,000 traffickers were convicted last year – an increase from the previous year. These numbers reflect an increasing number of countries acquiring the laws necessary to combat trafficking and having the political will to implement those laws.

Grant programs for local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute human trafficking (and related offenses) including initiatives to attack the demand for prostitution, which fuels sex trafficking, must be made available by governments and regional organizations. Every OSCE participating state should establish and expand training for law enforcement personnel, prosecutors and judges to handle this kind of crime in an appropriate manner and to sensitize these officials to the suffering of victims of trafficking in order to guarantee appropriate treatment of the victims.

International NGOs, human rights institutions, regional organizations and states must prioritize the fight against human trafficking among its most vital interests, and raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons.

National institutions and governments are encouraged to seek advice and assistance in drafting and revising relevant legislation. **Anti-trafficking legislation must address all forms of trafficking.** Strong legislation to criminalize slavery, sexual servitude, and deceptive recruiting for sexual services is needed including associated areas such as racketeering and organized crime legislation, all of which are applicable to traffickers. Laws that criminalize bringing a person into a country by means of threats, force or deception are obvious but still in need of passage in several OSCE countries. Broader deceptive recruiting for sexual services measures that cover the situation where trafficked persons are aware that they are coming to a country to work in the sex industry but are not aware that their employment in that industry will involve exploitation must be developed. Such measures significantly extend the scope of the offense, by including deception about the conditions under which sexual services are to be provided. Such legislation must include a specific mention of trafficking in children, with severe penalties. The causes of vulnerability of women and children must be addressed in any preventive legal response.

Further acts to advance the fight against human trafficking include:

- Strengthening witness and victim support;
- Providing help and education to young children and women who are being discriminated in their countries and who are likely targets of trafficking;
- Promoting social, legislative and human rights reforms at both national and international levels;

- Holding liable public officials who facilitate the act of trafficking or refrain from prosecuting such an act;
- Training and sensitizing military commanders of the access to trafficked women by their troops;
- Implementing security and boarder controls to detect and combat trafficking.

These are all small but imminently necessary steps to end a scourge that affects each and every one of us in the global community.