



December 2024

Human Trafficking: an "open wound on humanity"

December 10th marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This year's theme, **"Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now"**, underscores the urgent need to empower individuals and communities to advocate for their rights and build a more just and equitable world.

Human trafficking is the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people for exploitation using force, threat, coercion or deception" ([Palermo Protocols, 2000](#)); a heinous crime that violates fundamental human rights globally.

Victims, predominantly women and girls, face **significant barriers to reporting due to fear, trauma, societal stigma, and a lack of trust in authorities**. On October 24, 2024, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled against Slovakia for failing to fully investigate a human trafficking case involving Ms. B.B. Despite evidence suggesting she was trafficked to the UK and forced into sex work, the Slovak authorities only prosecuted for pimping.

As reported by Caritas Slovakia: B.B., a Slovak Roma woman, was orphaned and forced into marriage at 19. She was later sold into human trafficking, enduring sexual exploitation, violence, and drug addiction in the UK. Upon her return, she faced further trauma and injustice within the legal system. The experience left her with severe mental health issues, including schizophrenia, and a deep sense of worthlessness.

MS Parosha Chandran, UK's leading anti-slavery lawyer, says: "The ECtHR deemed this insufficient, emphasizing the need for thorough investigations into human trafficking, even when other crimes are **involved**". **This judgment sets a significant precedent for accountability in human trafficking cases** (click [here](#) learn more).

Pope Francis stated: "human trafficking is an open wound on humanity". As mentioned in the [COATNET 2024-2030 strategic plan](#): its members "journey together with people who have experienced trafficking, bearing witness to their central role within the Church and society to promote prevention, prioritise protection, and reinforce prosecution at all levels."

COATNET is committed to combating this scourge by promoting integral human development, caring for the dignity of every person, and working alongside survivors to prevent, protect, and advocate for human rights.

SAVE THE DATE:

Launch event of the
COATNET

2024-2030 Strategic Framework

Join us online on Feb 5th,
2:30-4 PM CET.

To register [CLICK HERE](#)

Role of COATNET Members in Promoting Human Rights

STOP Trafficking in Persons Project, CARITAS Slovakia

Caritas Slovakia serves as the sole provider of services within the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic's support and protection program for victims of human trafficking. Individuals who are reasonably suspected of having fallen victim to human trafficking and express a voluntary interest in participating in the specialised program of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic carried out by Caritas Slovakia can be provided with comprehensive support. This includes facilitated voluntary return and, based on a personalised assistance plan, additional services tailored to their specific needs.

Social worker Jana Ursiny says: "Recovering from trauma is a long-term process due to the abuse that individuals have suffered. Providing immediate, intensive and effective support after people have been identified and rescued gives them the best possible chance of recovery."

Mary Ward Loreto: Combating Human Trafficking in Albania

MWL operates across six regions in Albania, delivering essential services through Advice and Service Centers and Youth Centers. The organization's multifaceted approach encompasses rescue, reintegration, rehabilitation, and prevention efforts. By raising awareness, improving institutional practices, and empowering communities, MWL aims to reduce vulnerability to human trafficking, domestic violence, and gender-based violence. MWL has assisted 252 beneficiaries in the past six months, including 33 vulnerable individuals from Asia and Africa.

Caritas Norway: Protecting Workers' Rights

In 2024, Caritas Norway has provided legal assessment and support for over 1,064 cases, identifying 141 instances of labour exploitation and 3 potential cases of human trafficking.

On October 31, 2024, the organization submitted recommendations to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security for the upcoming national strategy against human trafficking.

On November 7, 2024, Caritas Norway hosted Minister of Labor and Inclusion Tonje Brenna. Caritas highlighted the need for enhanced collaboration between government agencies to improve support services for immigrants and people who experienced labour exploitation. The organization also advocated for a dedicated hotline to facilitate rapid assistance and increased long-term funding to support workforce integration initiatives. Minister Brenna acknowledged the valuable contributions of Caritas Norway and expressed commitment to considering these recommendations in future policy development.

Through collaboration with major newspapers and TV channels, Caritas shares cases that highlight these issues. Their website includes: "Worked for months without pay" (April 2024): a story of an exploited worker who received no pay for months. You can view the article [here](#).



Stay Informed and Engaged:



- International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking ([IDPAAHT](#)), February 8th
- If you want to **stay informed about COATNET members' activities**, please consult their website using [this contact list](#).

WHAT'S NEW?

- We encourage you to visit the website of the **Alliance on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** at <https://crimealliance.org/>. As an umbrella organization, it can provide significant support for integrating your organizations into UNODC's initiatives.
- [Applications to the 2025 Constructive Dialogues on Firearms and Technical Assistance & International Cooperation are now open!](#)
- Join the UNODC hybrid event on the [2024 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons!](#) Date: Jan 8th, Time: 3-5 PM CET. Register: <https://forms.office.com/e/f5T6YRsTX6>.

COATNET STEERING COMMITTEE ON 16 DECEMBER 2024

In alphabetical order: Ms Geneviève Colas of **Secours Catholique-Caritas France**, Ms Natalia Holynska of **Caritas Ukraine**, Ms Mary Khin of **Caritas Myanmar**, Ms Bellancille Mukamusigali of **Caritas Rwanda**, Ms Ariela Mitri of **Caritas Albania**, Dr Radoslaw Malinowski of **HAART Kenya**, Ms Sylvia Rai of **Caritas Nepal**, Ms Hessen Sayah of **Caritas Lebanon**, Ms Maria Knese Udongwo from **Caritas Nigeria**; In collaboration with Ms. Elena Sofia Fanciulli of **Caritas Internationalis**.

COATNET WORKING GROUPS' MEMBERS ON 16 DECEMBER 2024

Advocacy & Awareness Raising WG (in alphabetical order): Mr Fernando Baez of **Caritas Norway**, Mr Inmanuel C. Biswas of **Caritas Bangladesh**, Ms Geneviève Colas of **Secours Catholique-Caritas France**, Ms Natalia Holynska of **Caritas Ukraine**, Ms M. Shimray of **Caritas Asia**, Ms Bellancille Mukamusigali of **Caritas Rwanda**, Ms Ariela Mitri of **Caritas Albania**, Ms Chimwemwe Sakunda of **CADECOM-Caritas Malawi**.

Protection & Safeguarding WG (in alphabetical order): Ms Anna Bartosova of **Caritas Slovakia**, Ms Irena Kraja of **Mary Ward Loreto Foundation Albania**, Mr Davit Mosoyan of **Armenian Caritas**, Ms Sylvia Rai of **Caritas Nepal**, H.E. Michel Veuthey and Dr Emanuele Piluso of the **Sovereign Order of Malta**.

Survivor Leadership WG (in alphabetical order): Ms Felicitas Brugo Onetti of **USCCB**, Ms Mary Khin of **Caritas Myanmar**, Dr Radoslaw Malinowski of **HAART Kenya**, Ms Apinya Tajit of **Stella Maris-Caritas Thailand**, Ms Tek Sopheak of **Caritas Cambodia**.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Support Us: We rely entirely on donations. Your contribution will enable COATNET members to continue ensuring the effective implementation of the [COATNET 2024-2030 Strategic Framework \(available in EN, FR and SP\)](#) and providing essential support to at-risk and trafficked individuals. For those seeking further information or wishing to join the network, please email fanciulli@caritas.va. We also welcome your feedback and input.

