

UNODC Executive Director's video message
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023
30 July 2023

Around the world today, millions of victims of human trafficking are going unnoticed.

Many of them walk among us in everyday life, on street corners and construction sites, or in factories and public venues.

Human trafficking is a crime that hides not just in the shadows but in plain sight.

Yet our responses are falling short, leaving many unprotected.

According to data in UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022, more than 50% of cases of human trafficking are brought forward by victims or their families, with authorities struggling to detect and protect trafficking victims.

This is a concerning new trend compared to previous years.

Meanwhile, convictions of traffickers are falling, allowing them to act with greater impunity, and more structured criminal organizations are exploiting a higher number of victims for extended periods of time.

Those targeted are often the most vulnerable in society, left behind by poverty, conflict, and climate-related disasters.

In search of a better life, victims become shackled by the false promises of traffickers.

Women and girls, who account for around 60% of detected victims, are more likely to suffer sexual exploitation and higher levels of violence at the hands of their captors, while men and boys are being increasingly exploited for forced labour and criminal activities.

We need to step up our efforts to reach every trafficking victim, by strengthening detection, investigating cases, and prosecuting the criminals involved. We also need to proactively identify, assist, and support survivors of this crime, to truly leave no one behind.

This requires support from all sectors of society, from healthcare to social services to law enforcement.

The general public can help too, by reporting suspicious activities and services that may exploit trafficking victims, while the voice of civil society is crucial in raising awareness, as well as mobilizing and providing support to those in need.

On this World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, let us join forces and commit to reaching every trafficking victim and survivor, to give them hope and support on their journey towards justice and recovery.