The Government of Israel (GOI) continued to invests significant efforts and resources in the continuing struggle to eliminate trafficking in persons and slavery, through determined and consistent action; and demonstrated new and important accomplishments this year, in all fields of combatting trafficking – Protection, Prevention and Prosecution.

The National Anti-Trafficking Unit (NATU) continued to lead the relevant government authorities in working together with the active civil society in the field and the international agencies, to improve coordination and active screening for identification of victims; develop relevant responses to the new patterns emerging; and to increase enforcement efforts, leading to an increase in investigations and prosecution, both in scale and in scope, as well as identification of victims, especially in the labor field – where five (5) new male victims were recognized in 2018 alone.

GOI continued to provide broad protection and aid measures to the victims of trafficking, in a variety of services including state-funded shelters, and psychosocial therapy, full access to free medical treatment (including psychiatric care), access to employment and appropriate working visas; and state funded Legal Aid. The GOI also made significant progress in the field of prevention this year, upon the completion of a new bilateral agreement with the Philippines for the safe recruitment and protection of workers in the field of domestic caregiving. Negotiations for further agreements with other countries, in this field, are already in process, with the aim of preventing private recruitment for the domestic caregiving field.

Furthermore, the new five year National Plan that was confirmed by the Committee of Directors General (CDG), was submitted to the GOI towards the end of 2018 and officially adopted by the GOI in a Government Resolution on January 13th, 2019, to replace the previous plan from 2007 that had attained its goals. The resolution also directed the CDG to formulate and submit to the GOI's authorization an implementation budgeted plan of those aims within the national plan, that require extra budgeting or resources. The new plan presents an integrated, unified view on combating trafficking – dealing with all fields of exploitation, but with special emphasis on labor trafficking, slavery and forced labor. The plan emphasizes the use of new and alternative tools alongside criminal enforcement, as well as strengthening enforcement and prosecution in new areas including in the cyber realm, the business sector and in supply chains, tourism and others, and developing further protection and aid services to the current patterns. The plan further emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and expanding partnerships with new actors – while stressing the importance of continuing cooperation with NGOs.

**In the field of prevention**, GOI continued to conduct tailored training sessions for different officials who might encounter victims, and encourage active screening for victims of TIP. In 2018, NATU and other relevant officials conducted training sessions, for a variety of government officials, including prosecutors, social workers, judges, and many more professionals, keeping awareness levels high, and providing up-to-date information on patterns of trafficking and possible indicators. In this context, and in accordance with TIP report's 2018 Action Plan, NATU invested thought and research into evaluation of training effectiveness in trainings that took place during 2018.

In this regard, a special effort was made in 2018 in training and skill building in the Police, with the personnel expansion of the Police Trafficking Coordinator's (PTC) role – with the incoming officers conducting training sessions reaching over 400 police personnel and officers, in various forums and at various levels, covering every district. Trainings were also held this year for 320 the Population and Immigration Authority(under the auspice of the Ministry of Interior) (PIBA) employees in various divisions; The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services (MLSS) Labor Enforcement Division conducted a series of trainings on cultural competence, held by the Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI), founded by the Joint Distribution Committee Israel (**JDC**)**,** to give labor inspectors important tools when enforcing foreign workers' rights and interacting with them in the field.

Furthermore, lectures, seminars and interviews for the wider public took place on a regular basis throughout the year in different and new forums, such as higher education institutes and the media. Several lectures were given by the NATU to law students this year in different universities and colleges, and a collaboration was struck up with the new TraffLab project, which focuses on labor perspectives in human trafficking.

Important strides were also made in the field of combatting trafficking through reducing demand for prostitution – with a groundbreaking legislative amendment that declared the purchase of prostitution services illegal, and allocated significant funds to assist those who wish to leave the cycle of prostitution, in a broad array of services. Significant additional legislative activity was conducted this year, including a legal amendment aimed at facilitating early testimony of trafficking victims, a new legislation enabling the Police to take efficient action against phone numbers used for the advertisement of prostitution, and an amendment making publications recruiting for prostitution illegal.

Further efforts were invested in the arena of employment of foreign workers, where dramatic developments have occurred this year. The Bilateral agreements for the recruitment of foreign workers serve as a significant safeguard against trafficking in persons, preventing payment of illegal and inflated brokerage fees, and ensuring clear acquaintance of working conditions, rights and address and access to file complaints – 11,114 workers arrived in 2018 under those agreements. The bilateral agreements also include the mechanism of a government funded call center for foreign worker's complaints, accepting calls 24/7 in the workers' languages. 2018 saw the groundbreaking completion of the first full-scale bilateral agreement in the caregiving field, with the Philippines, affirming the GOI's commitment to regularize recruitment and employment in this field, and representing a groundbreaking move on an international scale as well. As mentioned, negotiations for further agreements with other countries, in this field, are already in process, with the aim of preventing private recruitment for the domestic caregiving field in entirety, in the near future. In addition, approximately twenty-five (25) inspectors were added to the PIBA enforcement unit, allowing for better enforcement of foreign workers' rights.

**In the field of Prosecution**, all law enforcement agencies, led by the State Attorney's Office, commenced integrated enforcement operations in the context of prostitution offenses, mainly closing down brothels – including strip clubs that were brothels in disguise. These operations involved a combination of criminal, civil, fiscal and administrative enforcement as part of a highly vigorous operation that has already shown results. It also contributed to the identification of trafficking victims that has risen significantly this year. To codify and disseminate those best practices, the Tel Aviv District Attorney's Office developed detailed guidelines for the investigation of cases involving prostitution and brothels, allowing thorough investigation of every aspect of the case, including financial aspects and the identifying of victims of trafficking. A significant new actor in enforcement efforts this year was the Cyber department of the State Attorney's Office, which acted against thirty-five (35) websites advertising prostitution this year. Care was also taken to shape the prosecution efforts in a way that would support rather than target those in prostitution – the Police took steps to reduce the number of cases opened against brothels as a public nuisance, and formulated a referral procedure indicating that women in prostitution encountered in Police investigations be referred to support organizations.

Substantive convictions and sentences were ruled and meted by the Judiciary this year, in precedential cases in all forms of trafficking, for example:

In ***The State of Israel v. Anonymous***, C.A.8027/13, 8104/13 The Supreme court delivered its ruling on 27.5.2018, in the first case in which the Supreme Court was asked to analyze the crime of holding under conditions of slavery, where the defendant did not have a relationship of physical control over the victims, and where the victims consented to the acts constituting the charge and were even physically free at times. The Court rejected the Appeal, upholding the conviction for numerous offences of holding a Person under Conditions of Slavery, and the sentence for twenty-six (26) years of imprisonment, conditional imprisonment for an additional two (2) years, a compensation of 100,000 NIS (25,000 USD) for the victims, and analyzing in depth the elements of the crime of holding a person under conditions of slavery, including precedential and advanced legal interpretation of the Law.

In ***The State of Israel v.*** ***Anonymous*** *S.Cr.C.**22534****-****08-17* ***(****Beer Sheva District Court)*, the defendant was convicted of multiple offences of trafficking in persons for the purpose of causing them to participate in an obscene publication or performance, and for committing sex offences, using the cyber arena, and was sentenced on the 25.10.2018 to fifteen (15) years imprisonment, compensation for the victim- his minor daughter in the sum of 60,000 NIS (16,349 USD) and suspended imprisonment.

**In the field of Protection**, In 2018 the Ministry of Health (MOH) expanded health services for victims of trafficking – the MOH approved the provision of a secondary medical treatment for victims of trafficking who are entitled to a year of rehabilitation but choose not to stay at the shelters. The treatment will be given at the Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikvah. Furthermore, in 2018 an arrangement was made with a gynecologist at the Beilinson Hospital, who now provides gynecological follow-ups, including pregnancy follow-up, to the residents of the shelter and apartments.

The frameworks for victims of trafficking continued adapting their services to the changing needs of victims – in 2018, creating support for victims with children – children who have experienced secondary trauma through the parent. The transitional apartments were fully converted to family apartments, and relevant services, including a new social worker specializing in children, were added to support the children and families.

On a final note, Israel continues to take a leading role in the global efforts to combat trafficking, becoming a developing source of knowledge and best practices in the field. The MASHAV institute held its biannual training for judges, in collaboration with the US Department of State, OSCE, UNODC, ILO and the Israeli Courts Administration, hosting 25 judges from 21 countries. Participants in this comprehensive training met prosecutors, police officials, international experts, and a Supreme Court Justice, visited the shelters for victims of trafficking and participated in a mock trial exercise. During the seminar, NATU coordinated work meetings between the Deputy Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at U.S. Department of State and other State Department officials, and various state actors including Prosecutors (national and district, civil and criminal), PIBA, the Legal Aid Administration, the Police, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. NATU also hosted a study delegation from Kenya. Representatives from NATU and the PTC participated in the OSCE simulation training on combatting trafficking in persons along migration routes, and the National Coordinator presented a case study in an international meeting of anti-trafficking coordinators in the Council of Europe, and presented GOI's actions in combatting TIP in the UN Council of Human Rights in Israel's Universal Periodic Review.