

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
30 July 2024

Responses to trafficking in persons must ensure the rights of persons with disabilities

GENEVA (30 July 2024) – On the occasion of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Siobhán Mullally, the UN Special Rapporteur on persons with disabilities Heba Hagrass, Council of Europe Executive Secretary for the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Petya Nestorova and Commissioner and Rapporteur on Human Mobility of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Andrea Pochak issued the following statement,

Trafficking in persons is a serious human rights violation. On this world day against trafficking in persons, we call on all states to ensure that measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities.

For persons with disabilities, risks of trafficking may be increased as a consequence of discrimination, exclusion and failures of policy and practice. Ineffective and inaccessible prevention, assistance and protection measures, lead to aggravated risks and failures to vindicate equal rights.

We call on all states to ensure that measures to combat trafficking in persons are universally accessible and ensure equal access to justice without discrimination. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy and agency, including the freedom to make one's own decisions must be ensured in all anti-trafficking measures.

Persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, have the right to reasonable accommodation to guarantee access to all prevention, assistance and protection measures on an equal basis with others. Meaningful participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities must be ensured in the design and implementation of measures to combat trafficking in persons, for all purposes of exploitation.

In situations of conflict, displacement or humanitarian emergency, persons with disabilities may be at heightened risk of exploitation due to lack of accessible and

inclusive responses. Girls and women with disabilities may face multiple risks, exclusion, and reduced access to protection and relief efforts.

Addressing the structural causes of trafficking requires urgent action to ensure access for all to education and training, just and fair conditions of work, freedom of movement and choice of residence, and the right to independent living.

States must ensure that anti-trafficking prevention, assistance and protection measures are designed, developed and provided on the basis of the principles of universal design, guaranteeing the accessibility of all information, facilities and services provided.

Children with disabilities living in institutions, in street situations, refugee, migrant or internally displaced children, are at greater risk, especially when child protection systems are weak, non-inclusive and enforcement of the rights of the child and protection of best interests are limited. Protection of the rights of all children, leaving no child behind, is central to anti-trafficking measures.

The voices of persons with disabilities need be heard. Organisations of persons with disabilities, including those representing women, children, youth and older persons with disabilities, must participate in the design and implementation of measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, for all purposes of exploitation, ensuring equal protection of the law and effective access to justice. ENDS

*** The experts: Ms. Siobhán Mullally, [UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children](#); Ms. Heba Hagrass, [UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities](#); Ms. Petya Nestorova, Council of Europe, Executive Secretary, [Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#) and Ms. Andrea Pochak, [Commissioner and Rapporteur on Human Mobility of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#).**

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