

14 February 2002

## **Fact Sheet on U.S. Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons**

### **State Department outlines U.S. anti-trafficking activities**

*Following is the text of a State Department fact sheet, released February 14, on U.S. activities to combat trafficking in persons:*

#### **U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesman**

February 14, 2002

#### **FACT SHEET**

#### **U.S. Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons**

- \* **January 31, 2002** -- The Department of Justice issued the T visa regulation, outlining the elements necessary for a human trafficking victim to be eligible for classification as a T nonimmigrant alien. The T visa will enable certain trafficking victims to live and work legally in the United States for three years while their cases are investigated and prosecuted. There will be 5,000 T visas available annually.
  
- \* **October 2001** -- The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons was established to support the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, as authorized by Trafficking Victims Protection Act.
  
- \* **July 24, 2001** -- The Departments of Justice and State issued a regulation implementing § 107(c) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. This regulation sets forth the procedures and assigns responsibilities for Justice and State Department officials to carry out requirements related to the identification and protection of victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.
  
- \* **July 2001** -- The Department of State issued the first annual Trafficking in Persons report, which presented information gathered from 186 embassies and consulates as well as non-governmental and press reports. The report assessed the counter-trafficking efforts of 82 countries that were determined to have a significant number of

trafficked victims and became a primary tool for engaging countries on the issue and identifying areas for improvement.

\* **March 2001** -- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiated a certification process to assist trafficking in persons victims. To date, HHS had issued 209 certification letters to adults, and nine eligibility letters to minors under the age of 18. These letters enabled a total of 218 trafficking victims to become eligible to apply for federal and certain state benefits to the same extent as refugees.

\* **December 2000** -- The Department of State took the lead in negotiating the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, to which approximately 100 countries have become signatories to date. This international document provides a framework for action for countries throughout the world to combat trafficking.

\* The Department of Justice currently has 91 trafficking investigations pending, which represents nearly a 20 percent increase over the number of investigations from a year earlier and a three-fold increase since establishing its Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force toll-free complaint line in February 2000.

\* In its fiscal year 2002 budget, the Justice Department received \$10 million to award grants to fund domestic trafficking victim service programs established by state and local governments as well as non-governmental organizations. The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division received an increase of \$770,000 to hire seven additional prosecutors and five support staff who will work on human trafficking cases. The Division has created the positions of Special Litigation Counsel for Involuntary Servitude and Special Counsel for Trafficking in Persons, the latter of which is dedicated to outreach.

\* HHS awarded over \$1.25 million in discretionary grants during fiscal year 2001 for victims of trafficking to eight organizations throughout the United States. Grant funds may be used for a wide range of services to certified (adult) and eligible (minor) victims of trafficking, including case management, temporary housing, special mental health needs, legal assistance referrals, and cultural orientation. In addition, trafficking grant funds may be used to fund other services needed to bridge the gap between the date of HHS certification/eligibility letters and the receipt of public benefits and support services.

\* The State Department has supported approximately 100 global anti-trafficking programs or initiatives in over 40 countries, and works closely with both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Labor to coordinate these programs. The estimated value of these programs is \$11.5 million.

\* USAID supported anti-trafficking activities in around 25 countries with more than \$6 million in FY 2001 funds. USAID/Ukraine's Trafficking Prevention Program is one example of many such anti-trafficking initiatives. Seven regional centers throughout Ukraine now offer job skills training, hot lines, crisis prevention, and referral services to vulnerable women. More than 30,000 women have used the services provided by these centers. USAID also funded a three-part docudrama, *If I Don't Return*, exposing the dangers of trafficking, and over 1000 copies will be distributed to organizations throughout the country to help advance their own anti-trafficking awareness programs.

\* The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs negotiated a \$1.4 million dollar cooperative agreement with the International Research and Exchange Board, a non-governmental organization, to conduct a two-year anti-trafficking project in Eastern Europe. This program's goal is to prevent trafficking of women by creating viable economic alternatives for at-risk women in seven major cities. Approximately 13,500 women will be trained annually.

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**March 2001** -- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiated a certification process allowing trafficking victims to become eligible to apply for federal and certain state benefits to the same extent as refugees.

**December 2000** -- United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (100 national signatories to date) provides an international framework to combat trafficking.

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