



SOVEREIGN HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

52nd Session of the Human Right Council
Geneva, 3 April 2023
Report on Interventions about Human Trafficking

At the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council, Michel Veuthey delivered three statements in the following inter-active dialogues.

1. **A/HRC/52/31 - Sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material**

On Wednesday, March 8th, 2023, the 52nd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council held an Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh, on child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation. In her Report ([A/HRC/52/31](#)), the Special Rapporteur focused on **reparation as an integral part of the recovery** process for such crimes and continued by speaking about her recommendations to States on how to proceed with those who have been affected by human trafficking, child prostitution, and child pornography in both conflict and non-conflict situations. The Special Rapporteur then suggested that States and other stakeholders should implement national and international frameworks on providing reparation to these victims.

As the eighth speaker, Professor Veuthey, the Ambassador of the Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, highlighted the **value of the concrete action of many religious congregations** and described the **work of the Order of Malta** in raising awareness, assisting victims through medical and social programs, providing free online training courses for helpers, and organizing webinars on human trafficking. Michel Veuthey reiterated the support of the Order of Malta for the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur and the possibility of an increased collaboration with her.

The dialogue then turned to the use of certain terminology when speaking of victims and survivors. There was a discussion between the Russian representative and the Special Rapporteur about when it may be best to use the term ‘sex’ and when to use the term ‘gender’ in reference to victims and survivors.

Finally, 61 other States and organizations engaged in the general discussion, including the International Confederation of Catholic Charities (Caritas Internationalis). Overall, the conversation centered on actionable change to better address policies concerning psychological and social care for victims and survivors. It was also said that the sale and exploitation of children has a long-term impact on victims, and there is also a gender component to the crimes that cannot be ignored. Lastly, child victims should have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process on all matters that concern them, especially reparation, if it is what they desire.



SOVEREIGN HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

2. A/HRC/52/60 - Children and Armed Conflict

On Thursday, March 16th, 2023, the 52nd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council held an Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Ms. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, on Children and Armed Conflicts. In her Report ([A/HRC/52/60](#)), the Special Representative focused on how 2022 was yet another year marked by conflict, climate insecurity, and geopolitical divisions leading to a sustained high number of grave violations against conflict-affected children. In 2022, over 8,000 children were killed and maimed by armed forces and groups, more than 7,000 children were recruited and used, and over 4,000 were abducted.

Furthermore, Ms. Gamba said that her office was working together with partners to enhance the long-term protection and prevention of children affected by conflicts. Nevertheless, it is crucial for countries to comply with their obligations under international law and prioritize human rights. The collaboration with United Nations partners and Member States has resulted in significant progress in safeguarding children in several countries and regions. For example, in 2022 and 2023, Australia, Colombia, the Republic of the Congo, and Tunisia endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. Moreover, Burkina Faso and Nigeria's transitional authorities signed a handover protocol to transfer children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors. In the Central African Republic, a national plan of action against the trafficking of children was signed, which aimed to prevent the use of children by the National Defence Forces. In Yemen, the Houthis signed an action plan with the United Nations to put an end to and prevent the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming of children, and attacks on schools and hospitals. Ms. Gamba also mentioned that she had engaged with conflict parties in various situations concerning children and armed conflict, such as in Afghanistan, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine, and South Sudan, to acquire concrete commitments to avoid severe violations.

Professor Veuthey, the Ambassador of the Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, intervened highlighting the value of the concrete action of many religious congregations and described the work of the Order of Malta in raising awareness, assisting children victims of armed conflicts through medical and social programs, providing free online training courses for helpers, and organizing webinars on human trafficking. Prof. Veuthey reiterated the support of the Order of Malta for the recommendations of the Special Representative and the desire for an increased collaboration with her.

This Session provided the opportunity to further deepen the collaboration with the Special Representative and to confirm her presence at the Side-Event co-organized by the Order of Malta on “Human Trafficking in Armed Conflicts and Post-Conflict Situations” which took place on Monday, March 27th at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in collaboration with [Caritas](#). See the [special report on this event](#).



SOVEREIGN HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons

3. A/HRC/52/61 – Violence against children

On Thursday, March 16th, 2023, the 52nd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council held an Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Najat Maalla M'jid, on Violence Against Children. In her Report ([A/HRC/52/61](#)), the Special Rapporteur focused on protecting children in the digital environment. She highlighted the many benefits technology has had on our society and on children, but she reiterated that the increase in activity online also means that children are experiencing an increase in risk of cyber-bullying, sexual exploitation, self-harm, trafficking, recruitment, fraud, and identity theft. These crimes often go unreported, meaning that perpetrators often go unprosecuted. The Special Rapporteur called for an increase in legislation that addresses all forms of violence and crimes against children. Lastly, she emphasized that children should be a part of the solution because the digital environment is now so central in childrens' lives. She spoke about how children need to turn to each other for support and protection and clarified that the true responsibility is not with children but with adults.

Professor Michel Veuthey, the Ambassador of the Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, intervened calling for increased cooperation between governments, faith-based organizations, and civil society organizations in order to combat violence against children. He cited the Order of Malta's training courses and webinars on human trafficking as resources that can be used for free.

Overall, the conversation centered on actionable change to prevent violence against children through technology such as through comprehensive legislation at the state-level and the proper allocation of resources to prosecute perpetrators. It was also said that violence against children has long-term impacts on victims, and there is also a gender component to the crimes that should be researched further. Lastly, child victims should have the opportunity to be involved in supporting and protecting each other against these crimes.
