



SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA

AMBASSADOR TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

NEWSLETTER



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EVENT OF THE SEASON

Refugees, Migrants Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Event at the United Nations in Geneva – 16 October 2024



On Wednesday 16 October 2024 the side-event on “*Refugees, Migrants Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons*” took place in Geneva at the Palais des Nations from 1 to 2:30 PM. The event was organized by the Sovereign Order of Malta in collaboration with the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law and co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Holy See, Italy Switzerland as well as UNHCR.

The event was opened by *H.E. Michel Veuthey*, Ambassador to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons from the Sovereign Order of Malta. He addressed the urgent global issue of migrants, refugees, and human

trafficking. With 281 million international migrants and **43 million** refugees worldwide, many are vulnerable to exploitation, including forced labor, sexual abuse, and organ trafficking. Human trafficking impacts over 50 million people, generating **\$236 billion** annually for traffickers. The speaker calls for stronger laws, better protection, and international cooperation to protect vulnerable populations, emphasizing that this is not just a legal or political issue, but a moral one that demands collective action to uphold human dignity.

The speakers were:

- **H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero**, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer to the United Nations in Geneva for the Holy See,
- **Mr. Claudio Delfabro**, Director of the Department of International Refugee and Migration Law at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL),
- **Mr. Vincent Cochetel**, Special Envoy for the Western and Central Mediterranean Situation at the UNHCR,
- **Ms. Alem Makonnen**, Senior Policy Officer at the Protection Division of the International Organization for Migration (IOM),
- **Mr. Simone Capolupo**, Head of the Knowledge Management Department at the Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF),
- **Ms. Kendall Alaimo**, a survivor, international speaker, activist, and clinical educator.

Following the main speakers, *H.E. Vincenzo Grassi*, Ambassador of Italy, and *H.E. Gerhard Putman-Cramer*, Ambassador of the Parliament Association of the Mediterranean, took the floor to address the pressing issue of human trafficking. Ambassador Grassi reiterated Italy’s commitment to tackling the root causes of human trafficking, particularly through enhanced cooperation within the Mediterranean region. Ambassador Putman-Cramer echoed this sentiment, stressing that legislative action and international collaboration are key to mitigating the growing threat of trafficking networks across borders. Furthermore, on behalf of *H.E. Ambassador Jürg Lauber*, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations Office at Geneva, *Mr. Sylvain Corderoy* took the floor affirming that Switzerland is strongly committed to implementing and targeting human trafficking through a multi-stakeholder approach and is currently implementing its Third International Action Plan against Human Trafficking.

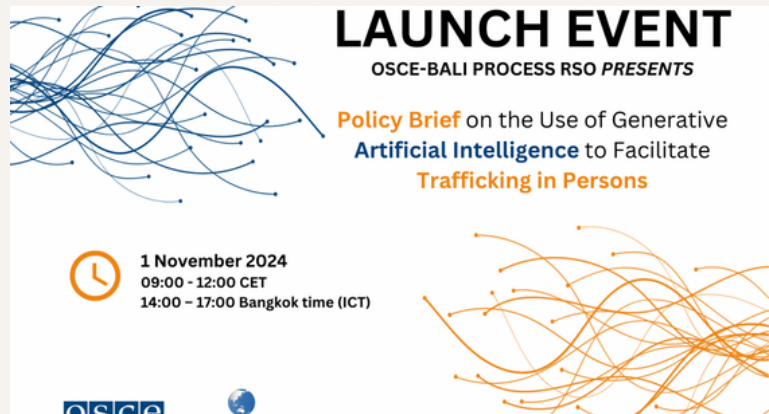
The event attracted several Permanent Missions (Belarus, Germany, Finland, Italy, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine as well as representatives from the Council of Europe, British Refugee Council, IOM and UNHCR) and over 150 participants, combining both in-person attendees and online participants.



OSCE & Bali Process Regional Support Office

Policy Brief on the use of AI to Facilitate Trafficking in Persons

On November 1, 2024, the OSCE and the Bali Process Regional Support Office launched a policy brief in Vienna to address the growing role of generative AI in human trafficking. The event brought together representatives from governments, the private sector, and international organizations to discuss how traffickers are increasingly leveraging AI to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, automate recruitment processes, and expand their operations on a larger scale. The discussions underscored the urgent need for enhanced collaboration, innovative policies,



and technological tools to counter these advanced trafficking tactics. **Dr. Kari Johnstone**, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, opened and concluded the conference by highlighting the dual-edged nature of technological advancements. She stressed that while technology can drive progress, it also provides new opportunities for exploitation, making coordinated efforts among governments, the private sector, and civil society critical to staying ahead of traffickers' evolving tactics.

The conference explored the ways traffickers exploit AI to bypass traditional barriers such as language and culture, enabling them to automate and scale recruitment efforts. AI's ability to learn from past successes makes it particularly effective, requiring minimal human input while continuously improving its operations. In Southeast Asia, cyber scam centers fueled by AI have contributed to a significant rise in human trafficking. Victims are lured with false job promises, trafficked through transit points, and forced into abusive conditions to commit fraud. Social media, online gambling platforms, and even the metaverse have become tools for recruitment and money laundering, often operating with limited regulatory oversight.

Globally, platforms such as Backpage, initially used for legitimate purposes, have become hubs for trafficking, hosting millions of ads related to sexual exploitation. Research has identified thousands of websites linked to trafficking, emphasizing the importance of mapping these hubs and prioritizing proactive investigations. The conference also highlighted the role of cryptocurrency in laundering proceeds from trafficking and the risks posed by advanced tools like deepfake technology, which traffickers use for psychological manipulation and falsifying identities.

To combat these threats, the participants called for stronger partnerships between governments, NGOs, and technology companies. This includes developing AI-driven tools to detect and prevent trafficking, improving communication between law enforcement and social media platforms, and investing in public awareness campaigns. Efforts must also focus on financial tracking and dismantling the digital infrastructure supporting trafficking networks.

The discussions at the conference reinforced the urgency of addressing the misuse of AI in human trafficking and underscored the need for strategic, collaborative action across all sectors. By leveraging technology for good, it is possible to counter these emerging threats and protect vulnerable individuals worldwide.

The OSCE's Report is available [here](#) while our full report is available [here](#).



29th International Humanitarian & Security Conference 21 November 2024

The 29th Annual International Humanitarian and Security Conference (IHSC), hosted by Webster Geneva Campus, occurred on 21 November 2024 at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) in Geneva. The conference, themed “The Resurgence of Conflicts: Challenges to Existing Security, Humanitarian, and Human Rights Frameworks,” provided an important platform to address the global implications of recent and ongoing conflicts. These discussions were particularly timely, as this year marked the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, raising critical questions about the effectiveness of international humanitarian law amidst contemporary crises.



The conference took place in the context of recent geopolitical upheavals, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and escalating tensions in East Asia involving China, North Korea, and other actors. These conflicts have necessitated a reassessment of global security strategies, with Europe, the West, and other regions building up their military capabilities and rethinking their defense postures.

The conference consisted of four sessions and featured prominent speakers representing a range of esteemed institutions and organizations, adding depth and diversity to the discussions. The fourth panel, “75 Years On: Have the Geneva Conventions Failed to Protect Civilians and the Victims of War?” was chaired by *Ambassador Michel Veuthey*; he contributed insights into the humanitarian challenges associated with contemporary conflicts. He highlighted the importance of reaffirming the universality of the Fundamental Principles of Humanity, recalling the origins and historical context of the Geneva Conventions, and mobilizing public opinion for the full implementation of these principles, as well as all international legal instruments that exist.

In conclusion, the conference underscored the urgent need for reforms to existing frameworks governing security, humanitarian actions, and human rights through dynamic exchanges and collaborative dialogue. The presence of distinguished speakers and organizations highlighted the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in navigating the complex challenges of modern conflicts. The IHSC reaffirmed its role as a critical forum for advancing dialogue, fostering innovation, and striving for sustainable peace and security in an increasingly turbulent world.





The Protection and Wellbeing of Fishers against Human Trafficking

21 November 2024 – United Nations Geneva



On November 21, 2024, the World Fisheries Day, an event entitled “*The Protection and Wellbeing of Fishers against Human Trafficking*”, was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The event was organized by the Sovereign Order of Malta’s Ambassador Michel Veuthey in collaboration with International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN), Stella Maris, and PRAEVENI GLOBAL, and co-sponsored by the ILO, and by the Permanent Missions of the Holy See, Kenya, the Philippines, and the UK.

The event aimed to highlight the exploitation of fishers and propose measures to integrate their rights

into global policies on modern slavery, human trafficking, and labor. With 58.5 million people directly employed in fisheries and an estimated 600 million dependent on the sector, participants emphasized that workers’ rights are severely neglected. Migrant workers are at increased risk of abuse, often exacerbated by the lack of enforcement of international labor standards. Despite existing legal instruments and mechanisms, systemic gaps leave too many workers vulnerable.

The event was introduced by **H.E. Michel Veuthey**, Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons. Keynote speakers included **Dr. Miguel Bernal (FAO)**, who stressed regional strategies for sustainable fisheries and workers’ rights, and **Christine Bader (ILO)**, who addressed gaps in labor law enforcement. Other presentations were made by **Kevin Hyland OBE**, former UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner; **Dr. Jessica Sparks** (Tufts University), who highlighted the link between environmental protection and labor exploitation; **Chris Williams (ITF)**, on union-led anti-trafficking efforts; and **Fr. Marcio Toniazzi (SIMN)**, who discussed the role of faith-based networks in advocacy (see attached concept note).

The discussions resulted in five actionable recommendations:

1. enforce international and national labor laws,
2. build labor protections into sustainability certifications,
3. expand legal and social support for trafficked fishers,
4. improve cross-border cooperation to combat illegal fishing linked to human trafficking, and
5. promote ethical recruitment practices for migrant workers.

Moderated by **Fr. Bruno Ciceri** of Stella Maris, the event concluded with an interactive debate, that urged stakeholders to prioritize systemic reforms that protect fishers’ livelihoods. Participants emphasized the need for governments, international organizations, and civil society to work together to address this issue comprehensively. The event’s proposals will inform policy development in frameworks such as the G20, G7, and EU Due Diligence Directive. By raising awareness and promoting practical strategies, the event marked a significant step towards addressing exploitation in the fisheries sector and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for millions of people worldwide.

Additional documents on this topic are available online at <https://bit.ly/HT-FISHERIES-HANDOUTS>.

The recorded event is available [online](#)



10th Day on the Convention on the Rights of the Child Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona - 27 November 2024



On Wednesday, November 27, Ambassador Michel Veuthey was invited to participate in a panel discussion at the Tenth Conference on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, held at the Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona. The conference, organized under the direction of Dr. Carmen Parra Rodríguez, Director of the UNESCO Chair for Peace, Solidarity and Intercultural Dialogue, focused on the rights of the girl child. Ambassador Veuthey addressed the critical issue of trafficking in girls. His insights were part of a broader panel that included experts

on child marriage, femicide and female genital mutilation. The event provided a platform for distinguished speakers, among which Mrs. Elisalex Löwenstein (“Mary’s Meals Foundation”), to engage on pressing social issues, emphasizing the intersection of human rights and gender equality. Ambassador Veuthey’s contribution highlighted the vital role of international cooperation and advocacy in protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse, and the role of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Both the Rector of the Abat Oliba CEU University, **Dr Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga y Salamanca**, and the Vice-Rector, **Dr. Sergio Rodríguez López-Ros**, Special Envoy of the Order of Malta for the New Forms of Exclusion, are Members of the Order.

30th Anniversary of the CCEM (Committee against Modern Slavery) Paris, 15 November 2024

The **Comité Contre l’Esclavage Moderne (CCEM)** celebrated its 30th anniversary on November 15, 2024, at the Maison du Barreau de Paris. The event brought together experts, policymakers, survivors, and distinguished guests, including Michel Veuthey, Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, who was invited and attended the conference along with his advisor Mr. Emanuele G. A. Piluso, Attaché of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in Geneva. The colloquium highlighted CCEM’s three decades of efforts in fighting human trafficking and modern slavery, with achievements such as aiding over 1,100 victims and participating in more than 500 legal cases.

Discussions focused on reviewing legislative progress, the implementation of anti-trafficking laws, strengthening interdisciplinary partnerships, and raising awareness through media and research. Key speakers included **Petya Nestorova**, Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; **Cyril Cosmes**, Director of the International Labour Organisation Office in Paris; **Magali Lafourcade**, Secretary General of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), and Roxana Maracineanu, Secretary General of the Interministerial task-force on combatting violence against women and human trafficking (MIPROF).

Panel discussions addressed evolving victim profiles, judicial progress, awareness-raising, and effective victim recovery, with contributions from experts, journalists, and survivors. The concluding session included insights from European Court of Human Rights Judge **Mattias Guyomar** and other notable figures. The event also offered networking opportunities, photo exhibitions, and audiovisual presentations. Participants emphasized the continued need to address labor exploitation, foster collaboration for victim support, and bring hidden realities to light. The day concluded with a celebratory cocktail, reaffirming a shared commitment to eradicating trafficking and slavery.





Meeting with H.E. Ambassador Muhammadou M.O. KAH, Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the UN in Geneva

On Monday, 2 December 2024, a meeting was held at the Permanent Mission of the Gambia to the United Nations in Geneva to address the pressing issue of human trafficking. The gathering included **H.E. Ambassador Muhammadou M.O. KAH**, Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the UN in Geneva; **Cherno Marenah**, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Gambia; **H.E. Michel Veuthey**, Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons; **Kevin Hyland OBE**, the UK Government's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (2014–2018) and Chief Executive of PRAEVENI GLOBAL; and **H.E. Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo**, Chancellor Emeritus of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City.



Discussions focused on the pervasive challenge of human trafficking and the urgent need for collective action to address its root causes and consequences. Participants underscored the importance of formulating actionable strategies to combat this modern scourge, emphasizing the need for stronger international cooperation, victim support mechanisms, and robust legal frameworks.

As a result of the meeting, participants underscored the importance of partnerships among governments, international organizations, faith-based entities, and civil society to create sustainable solutions. The meeting reaffirmed their shared commitment to advocating for the dignity and freedom of every individual, ensuring that the fight against human trafficking remains a top priority on the international stage. In addition to strengthening bilateral and multilateral partnerships, the meeting demonstrated the global resolve to eradicate human trafficking and uphold human dignity.

Meeting with H.E. Ambassador Fancy Chepkemai TOO, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN in Geneva



On Monday, 2 December 2024, a meeting was held at the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations in Geneva to discuss the critical issue of human trafficking. The gathering included **H.E. Ambassador Fancy Chepkemai TOO**, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN in Geneva; **H.E. Michel Veuthey**, Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to monitor and combat trafficking in persons; **Kevin Hyland OBE**, the UK Government's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (2014–2018) and Chief Executive of PRAEVENI GLOBAL; and **H.E. Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo**, Chancellor Emeritus of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City.

The meeting provided an opportunity to engage in discussions about the urgent need for comprehensive action against human trafficking. Participants emphasized the importance of international cooperation in tackling this global challenge and the necessity for tangible solutions. A special focus was placed on the G20 Summit. Participants advocated for human trafficking to be placed at the top of global priorities. Discussions focused on identifying effective strategies to combat human trafficking, with an emphasis on prevention, victim support, and strengthening international legal frameworks.



10th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Human Trafficking held on Monday 2 December in Geneva



At the initiative of Ambassador Veuthey, a celebration for the 10th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Human Trafficking took place on Monday, December 2nd, 2024, at the Church of St. Nicolas de Flüe in Geneva. The event included a Holy Mass at 18:00, the reaffirmation of the Joint Declaration at 18:30, and a reception at 19:15.

The event reaffirmed the collective and ongoing commitment of religious communities to combat human trafficking. The event underscored the continued importance of interfaith and cross-sector cooperation in addressing the scourge of human trafficking. It highlighted the moral and practical approaches needed to prevent, combat, and eradicate modern slavery.

Speakers included:

- **H.E. Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo**, Chancellor Emeritus of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, moderated the event and made a statement on human trafficking.
- **Bishop Emeritus Alastair Redfern**, former leader of the Church of England's anti-slavery efforts, shared insights into the Church of England's work and the founding of the Santa Marta Group.
- **Monsignor Riyyan Chaves Mendoza**, Deputy Permanent Observer at the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations Office, gave the lecture of the 2014 Joint Declaration.
- **Mr. Kevin Hyland, OBE**, Former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner for the UK, Chief Executive of PRAEVENI GLOBAL, Strategy Director of Santa Marta Group, discussed his work with the Santa Marta Group and PRAEVENI GLOBAL, focusing on the urgent need to significantly increase resources (financial and human) to combat human trafficking.
- **Mrs. Frédérique Seidel**, Programme Executive for Child Rights at the World Council of Churches (WCC), highlighted the WCC's efforts to combat child trafficking in collaboration with UNICEF.
- **Father Jeff Bayhi and Father Chuck Swanson**, Directors of Metanoia, a shelter for trafficked girls in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, spoke about their work supporting victims and survivors of trafficking.
- **Reverend Glen Ruffle**, Representative of the Anglican Communion to the United Nations in Geneva, discussed the work of faith-based organizations against human trafficking in Geneva.
- **H.E. Michel Veuthey**, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta, concluded the event by reflecting on the Order's efforts to combat human trafficking. He expressed his gratitude to the speakers, participants, as well as to the Parish of St. John XXIII for their hospitality.

The complete recorded event is available [online](#).

The 2014 Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Human Trafficking is below:

"We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historical initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time.

In the eyes of God each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative."



Meeting with H.E. Marwan Sehnaoui President of the Lebanese Association of the Order of Malta



On Monday 9 December, **H.E. Marwan Sehnaoui**, President of the Lebanese Association of the Sovereign Order of Malta, and **Ms Oumayma Farah**, Head of Communications and Fundraising, visited the Permanent Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in Geneva.

The meeting focused on the significant contributions of the Lebanese Association, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict. Over the past few months, the Association has implemented effective initiatives, including managing a network of **60 projects**, carrying out **1,109,200 medical operations**, distributing **11,580,000 seedlings** and providing **888,694 social items** to those in need.

From right to left:

- Ralph Loren Eisendecker, Attaché
- Jean-François Kammer, Deputy Permanent Observer
- H.E. Michel Veuthey, Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, Deputy Permanent Observer
- H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann, Permanent Observer

Center:

- H.E. Marwan Sehnaoui, President of the Lebanese Association

From left to right:

- Yannick Galeazzi, First Secretary
- Cesare Lombardo, Intern
- Emanuele G. A. Piluso, Attaché
- Oumayma Farah, Head of Communication and Fundraising of the Lebanese Association



*The Ambassador and his team wish you
a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*



Additional Resources

Official Website of the Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to
Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

nohumantrafficking.orderofmalta.int/en/

All Webinars and Events on Human Trafficking since October 2020

adlaudatosi.org/

Online Courses on Human Trafficking

cuhd.org/

Good Practices

christusliberat.org/journal/

Linkedin

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/michel-veuthey-9619702/>



[Click here](#) to watch NTD France's interview
with the Ambassador to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons