



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Turkey on Trafficking in Human Beings

I. Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)

Human trafficking constitutes a violation of human rights and an offense to the dignity and the integrity of the human being, and is mostly referred as "modern day slavery".

Human trafficking is one of the most serious crimes and according to a UN study, it is the third most common crime after arms and drug trafficking.

Because of her unique geographical location bridging two continents and with a fast developing economy, Turkey has become a destination country.

II. Measures

Turkey introduced numerous administrative and legal measures regarding the main pillars of combating human trafficking, prevention, protection, prosecution, and cooperation.

Turkish Government closely cooperates with civil society to help and protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons.

In this regard, "The National Task Force on Fight against Human Trafficking" was established in 2002.

The National Task Force which includes relevant government institutions as well as NGO's, plays a significant role in policy making for prevention of human trafficking, identification and protection of victims and prosecution of traffickers.

Two National Action Plan in Fight against Human Trafficking were developed by the National Task Force and put into practice. The Action Plans aim at achieving relevant international standards in the fight against human trafficking, eradicating human trafficking in Turkey, strengthening relevant institutions, enhancing harmonization with the EU Acquis and strategy development in combatting human trafficking. The last meeting of the National Task Force was held in December 2014. "The Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking" was established according to the Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Its first meeting was held on 1 March 2017.

Turkey is a party to relevant international legal instruments to combat human trafficking.

UN Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) and its supplementary protocols on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants were ratified in March 2003 by Turkey.

Turkey has also signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in March 2009 and became a party as of 2nd May 2016.

In order to align with the international instruments, necessary amendments are made in relevant legislation, most significantly in the Turkish Penal Code and Law on the Work Permits for Foreigners and the Turkish Nationality Law to help combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.

Article 80 of Turkey's penal code prohibits both sex and labor trafficking and prescribes penalties of eight to 12 years' imprisonment. Article 227 of the Turkish Penal Code prohibits the facilitation of child prostitution and prescribes penalties of four to 10 years' imprisonment.

The 2013 "Law on Foreigners and International Protection" provides a legal definition of trafficking and establishes trafficking victims' eligibility for a special type of residence permit that can be renewed for up to three years.

Until the adaptation of a single frame law ("Law on Combatting Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims") the Turkish authorities adopted regulation to provide necessary legal base in the combat against human trafficking. Consequently, the Regulation on Combatting Human Trafficking and Protection of Victim entered into force in March 2016.

To avoid any problems with regard to implementation, the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) has sent the “Implementing Regulation for Fighting against Human Trafficking” of the Ministry of Interior to the governorates in 81 provinces.

III. Protection of victims

In order to fight against human trafficking in a more effective way, the “Department for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking” is established under the DGMM according to the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection dated April 2013. The said Department is responsible for fighting against human trafficking and protection of victims; implementing projects related to fight against human trafficking; setting up, operating and outsourcing the operation helplines for victims.

The aimed protection cycle begins with reporting and complaint of the victims and ends with support services that are provided for victims upon their consent and that are in line with international standard and best practices.

Turkey is providing two type of services for the victims of human trafficking. The first one is Victim Support Program and the second one is Voluntary and Safe Return Program. Victims of human trafficking can benefit from support services to be provided in Turkey upon their consent or can return to their home countries if they choose so on a voluntary basis.

According to the Victim Support Program, six month humanitarian visa and short-term residence permit are granted to the victims of human trafficking during their treatment, healthcare and legal proceedings. The visa and residence permit can be extended for the same period of time depending on the length of legal proceedings or treatment.

According to the Voluntary and Safe Return Program, voluntary return of victims is ensured in a safe way in cooperation with the law enforcement agencies, IOM, counterpart agencies in source countries and local non-profit organizations.

Turkey has opened women shelters in İstanbul, Ankara and Kırıkkale. These shelters are adequately funded by the Turkish Government.

Turkey, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), has put into service the 157 helpline for victims of human trafficking. The scope of the helpline has been extended to cover all the foreigners and it gives service in several languages.

IV. International cooperation

Turkey has taken part in various activates within bilateral, regional and global arrangements, and participated in the related activities of various international organizations and initiatives, such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Turkey is also engaged in efforts to address the issue of human trafficking at the regional level. In this context, Turkey has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.

Human trafficking cannot be prevented by governments acting individually or through traditional forms of international cooperation. In order to combat human trafficking, well-designed, coordinated and comprehensive response is required. In this context, acceding to international instruments and implementation of them in a genuine spirit of cooperation, goodwill and pragmatic approaches rather than strict formality, are essential for success.