

At Security Council, UN officials urge governments to implement rules on prosecuting traffickers

15 March 2017 – Human trafficking thrives in countries where the rule of law is weak or non-existent, top United Nations officials today told the Security Council, calling on Governments to make better use of the tools created under the UN flag to stop the victimization of men, women and children.

“At a time of divisions in so many areas, this should be an issue that can unite us,” Secretary-General António Guterres told the 15-member Council, stressing that “slavery is not a thing of the past.”

“Let us come together around the key issues of prosecution, protection and prevention, and thereby build a future without human trafficking,” he added.

The Secretary-General outlined a number of UN tools that exist which can be used to punish human trafficking, and to prevent it in the first place. Among them is the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol, which includes the first internationally agreed definition of the crime of trafficking in persons and provides a framework to effectively prevent and combat it.

He noted also the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and the complementary Global Plan of Action on Human Trafficking. Approved in 2010, the Plan aims to better coordinate national responses to this scourge, and includes a UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

In his speech, Mr. Guterres called on Member States to strengthen intelligence-sharing and other law enforcement, while also addressing the underlying vulnerabilities of victims, such as educating girls, respecting the rights of minorities, and creating safe paths for migration.

He also called for engagement with the private sector, and cautioned that any support needs to incorporate the voices and views of the people affected.

RELATED: Treaties against human trafficking key to combating the scourge, supporting victims – UN anti-crime official

According to UNODC’s 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, issued in late-December, victims of trafficking are found in 106 of 193 countries. Many of these are in conflict areas, where the crimes are not prosecuted.

“For organized crime networks, human trafficking is a low-risk, high-reward criminal business, a perception reinforced by the inexcusably low conviction rates still reported around the world,” told the Council Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC via videoconference from Vienna.

In addition to an estimated 21 million people around the world who are victims of forced labour and extreme exploitation, Mr. Fedotov discussed the threats facing refugees and displaced persons.

“As conflict displaces countless people, as the rule of law breaks down, as cooperation between countries falter, criminals see a clear business opportunity,” he noted.

The best way to counter trafficking and protect the most vulnerable is to fully implement and make sure of the frameworks already in place, Mr. Fedotov underscored.

He noted that the Global Plan of Action will be reviewed this October, and will focus on trafficking in conflict situations.

“I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity,” Mr. Fedotov told the Council.

Among the numerous speakers addressing the UN body today is Ashraf El Nour, Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM).

[News story: Better value for money and fairer profits](#)

This represents a 16% reduction in the rate applied to single source contracts and will ensure better value for money for taxpayers and give a fair return to industry. All savings will be reinvested into the defence budget, including delivering the equipment our Armed Forces need to keep the UK safe.

The unique nature of much of the MOD’s work means the department often has to award contracts without competition, either because there is one specialised supplier or because the procurement must not risk national security. This lower profit rate will ensure the UK taxpayer gets the very best deal, regardless of the way contracts are delivered. The MOD is making sure big business does its part to support an efficient and economical defence budget.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said:

Taxpayers can be confident that this reduced profit rate will deliver better value for money on contracts as our defence budget rises and we deliver our £178bn equipment programme.

The defence sector is important for our prosperity, supporting high skilled jobs, and this rate provides a fair return comparable with that in other international markets.

A strong supplier base is essential to the security and prosperity of the UK. However, big businesses must do their part to deliver savings and balance the UK's budget. The new lower profit rate ensures that these businesses receive a fair return for the work they do, while freeing money for reinvestment in vital defence equipment, supporting jobs and innovation.

The figure of 7.46% is the starting point for calculating the profit on each contract before taking into accounts factors such as risk and the amount of their own money suppliers invest. The new rate is similar to profits earned by government defence suppliers in Western Europe and North America. It will come into effect from 1st April 2017.

The Single Source Contract Regulations were brought into force in 2014, following the Currie Review into single source procurement, to ensure that such contracts were charged at the best possible rate both for taxpayers and suppliers.

The Written Ministerial Statement on the new rate is available [here](#)

Notice: P03 5NX, C D Jordan & Son Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: C D Jordan & Son Limited
 - Installation name: European Metal Recycling, Dundas Spur
 - Permit number: EPR/EP3292HT/V007
-

Notice: S045 3NX, Inutec Limited: environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for Radioactive Substances Activity. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency office you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
- what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)

[No rise in National Insurance for the self employed](#)

I am pleased the Chancellor has changed his mind on National Insurance. It is true the previous Chancellor defined the Manifesto promise as relating to NI for just the employed when he legislated to implement the promise, but there was no such limitation in the Manifesto or in the election speeches and broadcasts to warn the self employed they were not covered. It is always a good idea to keep the spirit and the letter of promises made.

I did speak in favour of not taxing the self employed and small business more, and put in representations from constituents against the Budget proposal. Removing this tax increase removes £325 m extra tax from 2018-19, and around £600 m in each of the next two years. I see no need to replace this "lost" revenue, as I expect the economy to grow a little faster than the official forecasts, which will generate more extra revenue than this policy change. Fortunately the sums involved are small against a total revenue of around £800 bn annually in the relevant years, so this item is under 0.1% of the total.