

	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of AFGHANISTAN
POSITION	DRA Delegate
COMMITTEE	United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)
AGENDA	Protecting victims of human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations.
DATE	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2020

The delegate of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan would like to bring to notice of UNHRC, the problem and the current situation of Human trafficking in my country Afghanistan.

It is not a sudden and one day out of the blue problem that we have started facing. It got built over a period of long time and landed us in the current situation related to human trafficking. We would first like to highlight the factors which had pushed us in to this problem which got aggravated gradually over the years.

Against the background of a highly complex ethnic composition, Afghanistan faces a variety of historical, economic, social and security factors that make Afghan men, women and children very vulnerable and sitting ducks for human traffickers.

1. Firstly, we need to notice, the long history of conflict which cannot to ignored. We were a Cold War battleground and then we were dragged in a fierce civil war all through the 1990s. Taliban gained control of most of the country in 1996. The Taliban used an extremist interpretation of Islam to assert repressive control of society while the economy remained in ruins and most government services ceased. Even after the establishment of the current government and international intervention the political and economic situation is not encouraging though it is improving slowly.  
Weakening of law and order also helps traffickers carry out its activities with impunity. Especially when the human trafficking is more sophisticated than ever with well-established networks across borders.  
In 2004, Afghanistan had the highest proportion of widows, orphans and disabled individuals in the world, left as easy targets of traffickers.
2. Insecurity is another factor which requires attention. Despite six years of efforts by the government, international community and international security forces, there is still a long list of anti-government elements such as the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, warlords, illegal armed groups and drug barons that exploits the basic rights of common people.  
With deteriorating security situation, the outreach of monitoring agencies is getting limited and the protection issues concerning women and children have become more challenging than ever. The growing insurgency is certainly paving the way for traffickers to prey ruthlessly with much more liberty than required.

3. Population displacement i.e. the Afghan refugee flow began in April 1978 and continuing to the neighbouring countries, United States and European Union. It is estimated that around 3 million people are living as refugees. Most of them are living in poor or extremely poor conditions.
4. Exacerbated by security problems, however, developmental progress has been painfully slow with Afghanistan having some of the lowest social indicators in the world. Despite billions of dollars in aid, Afghanistan ranks the 170th out of 189 countries as per UNDP report 2019. Because of poverty, there are many related problems which are relevant in our case:
  - Child Labour: According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 92.5 per cent of child labourers from 12 to 17 years of age work for more than 42 hours a week and the majority are exposed to adverse working conditions. Child labourers are thus serving as a large pool of potential targets for human trafficking in Afghanistan.
  - Sale of Children: Due to economic reasons, the sale of children by destitute families, including their own parents, is commonly seen in Afghanistan, sold for even \$10.
5. Social Factors: Traditionally, the Afghan society is patriarchal in its nature, and women often are considered the “property” of men. Women predominantly lack identity of themselves. Forced marriages are common throughout the country. Monetary transactions or agreements on debt relief are often made in trading Afghan women as if they were commodities. Women as a tool of dispute settlement. There are high incidents of violence against women. The situation for many women in Afghanistan is dire.
6. Child Abuse: Exploitation of boys can be found in Afghanistan. These boys are known as boys without beard, or bacha bereesh, and kept by adult men, often considered powerful in society. They are not only made to dance in social gatherings and parties, but also abused in many instances.

#### Action Plan (Since 2016)

- Raising Awareness: We have conducted wide-scale information and awareness campaigns to highlight risks and dangers associated with human trafficking and to educate the public and government authorities on ways to provide assistance and protection to victims
- Training: We have executed training programs for 2,400 Afghan government and law enforcement officials at the national, provincial, and local levels as well as community elders to help them identify and respond to cases of human trafficking
- Protection: We have prepared care providers (shelter workers, front line responders, case management workers, and social workers), skills trainers, employers, counsellors, education providers, health workers, and legal aid workers to effectively protect victims in high-risk communities; activity includes training/coordination with international non-governmental agencies to establish strong referral systems for victims

- Research: We will be publishing annual reports on various forms of human trafficking in Afghanistan
- Regional Cooperation: Supported in organizing regional consultations on migration issues including the prevention of human trafficking as well as assistance and protection at the state level.

## Accomplishments

- Developed the first counter-trafficking training manual (approved by Afghan government assisted by USAID); used to train government officials, NGOs, religious leaders, and academicians to identify, refer, and assist victims of human trafficking (VoTs).
- Established first national network of Afghan NGOs, Afghanistan Network in Combating Trafficking in Persons (ANCTIP), and a regional NGOs network, Asian Network in Combating Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP).
- Trained journalists on mainstreaming trafficking in persons (TIP) issue in Afghanistan
- National TIP Research conducted in collaboration with high-level TIP commission; research findings under review by the Commission.
- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) finalized; training in how to use the mechanism and referrals begun.
- First online Afghanistan Integrated Trafficking in Persons (TIP) database has been developed, installed into selected provinces, handed over to the TIP Commission, and introduced to users through various trainings.
- Delivered on-the-job training for 21 Data Specialists on Afghanistan Integrated Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Kabul and nine provinces; equipped Directorates of Justice in these provinces with IT equipment and internet facilities.
- Approximately 20 million Afghans have received TIP prevention and protection messages, including the most vulnerable (returnees and IDPs)
- Distributed publicity materials, held sports events and community interactions, and produced radio content to raise awareness of problem
- Assisted stranded migrants to return to home countries.
- Formed the TIP in Crisis Working Group of international organizations supporting the Afghan government to respond to the protection needs of trafficked persons

## Conclusion:

Our fight is long and tiring to combat the human trafficking as it is deep rooted and carried out since ages in the country. However, the we have initiated the process and policies in the right direction. We have been penetrating the masses for creating awareness about the problem. With training and monitoring infrastructure in place, it is now a lot more easily for us to identify the victims and bring the culprits under justice under the new laws formulated by our government. With the current political stability and support of international community we hope to pull up the things speedily.