

March 7, 2023

His Excellency Antonio Guterres
Secretary General
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017
Re: United Nations General Assembly 2023

Dear Secretary Guterres:

We are writing to request that the focus of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) on September 5, 2023 be *Combating Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery*. As you are aware, human trafficking is one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, enslaving millions of people through sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, forced marriage, and other forms of modern slavery. There are currently more human trafficking victims in the world now than at any other time in history, and this number is growing.

Human trafficking is a crime that impacts every nation in the world and deprives people of their most basic rights and freedoms while stripping them of their dignity and worth. It is also the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, generating more than \$150 billion annually and serving as a significant source of funding for dictatorships and movements that threaten the stability and security of the world¹. Further, terrorist groups like Boko Haram and ISIS profit from systemic human trafficking abuses. Other examples in recent years include state-sponsored labor trafficking and children sold as sex slaves.

Human trafficking is unique among human rights abuses in that local and regional escalation not only exploits millions of people in bonded labor, sexual exploitation, organ harvesting, forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery, but it also funds and exacerbates global violence, including terrorism, armed conflict, religious persecution, gender apartheid, and environmental degradation. We can no longer ignore the connection between local and regional exploitation, global security crises, and human trafficking trends.

On a positive note, ending human trafficking helps to fulfill crucial parts of multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)². Additionally, human trafficking is a human rights violation that elicits broad engagement across ideological divides, and so stands as a uniquely unifying platform for global human rights deliberations. Thus, we urge you to consider making human trafficking the focus of UNGA 78. Through global awareness, cooperation, and collaboration, there is hope that we can bring an end to this horrendous evil. Thank you for your consideration of our letter, and we look forward to your response.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang--en/index.htm

² [SDGs \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/)

Sincerely,