



Christian Conference of Asia

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CCA Statement on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons *'Reach Every Victim of Trafficking: Leave No One Behind'*

Human trafficking, a form of modern slavery, is an affront to the foundational value that everyone is created equal and has the inalienable right to life with dignity, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Trafficking in persons is a crime of exploitation and coercion, violating the principles of justice and compassion that are at the heart of our Christian faith. Every year, millions of people are exploited within and across borders, subjected to forced labour, sexual exploitation, and various forms of dehumanisation. Civil war, ethnic conflicts, and the climate emergency exacerbate the risks of being trafficked, especially in regions like Asia. Displacement, socio-economic inequalities, and discrimination leave thousands of Asians vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers.

Tackling the global problem of trafficking requires a collective effort, transcending the boundaries of government, business, and civil society. As Christians, we are called to stand in solidarity with the marginalised and vulnerable, protect the oppressed, and seek justice for the victims. Through partnerships and collaborations, we can create a net of safety to protect each victim of trafficking, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Our faith teaches us that we are all part of one body, interconnected and interdependent. The Bible reminds us of our duty to protect the vulnerable and seek justice for the oppressed. In Isaiah 1:17, we are called to "learn to do right; seek justice, defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the orphaned, and plead the case of the widow". This commandment compels us to join hands and form partnerships to address the root causes of trafficking and work towards its eradication. It is through our collective efforts that we can build a just and compassionate society, free from the chains of exploitation. By sharing resources and information, we can equip front-line stakeholders to effectively track and respond to evolving trafficking trends. By partnering with survivors, we can establish trauma-informed policies and strategies that prioritise the well-being and empowerment of victims. Our partnerships should extend to the trafficked people, ensuring that their voices are heard, their rights are protected, and their dignity is upheld. Partnerships are the essential foundation for sustainable and successful anti-trafficking work. To effectively combat trafficking, partnerships must extend beyond the boundaries of our immediate communities. International collaboration is crucial in identifying victims, prosecuting perpetrators, and implementing comprehensive protection services. By joining forces with governments, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, international organisations, and the private sector, we can strengthen our collective response to transnational trafficking and ensure that victims are not left without support. Only by working hand in hand can we dismantle the networks of traffickers and create a world where every victim is reached and protected.

Survivors of trafficking are not merely victims but essential partners in the anti-trafficking movement. Their lived experiences and unique perspectives bring invaluable insights that can shape programmes, policies, and strategies to ensure victim-centred, trauma-informed, and culturally competent responses. As Christians, we are called to love our neighbours and extend a helping hand to those in need. Leaving no one behind in the fight against trafficking means ending the exploitation of victims, providing comprehensive support for survivors, and addressing the vulnerabilities that make certain groups more susceptible to trafficking. It requires us to build strong partnerships based on trust, respect and shared responsibility. We are reminded "to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8). Let us heed this wisdom and prioritise survivor engagement and leadership in our partnerships.

On this *World Day Against Trafficking in Persons–2023*, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) calls on governments, law enforcement agencies, public services, and civil society to recommit their efforts to prevent trafficking, identify and support victims, and end impunity. We urge policymakers to create clear and resourced plans that prioritise the fight against trafficking and ensure the well-being of survivors. Let us sensitise our churches to the reality of human trafficking and mobilise all sectors to take action. Together, let us strengthen our resolve to end trafficking, a crime that violates the basic dignity and rights accorded to each human being. By forging partnerships rooted in compassion, justice, and solidarity, we can build a world where no one is left behind and where the scourge of trafficking is eradicated.

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