



30 July 2025

## **Statement on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons “Human Trafficking is Organised Crime – End the Exploitation”**

Human trafficking remains one of the most pervasive and highly organised criminal enterprises in Asia. Transnational syndicates operate in covertly and overtly, exploiting legal loopholes, migration routes, and digital platforms. They recruit, control, and abuse vulnerable individuals, profiting from forced labour, sexual exploitation, and coercion into criminal activities with alarming impunity.

The theme of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons for 2025, “Human Trafficking is Organised Crime – End the Exploitation,” highlights the urgent need to dismantle these networks and strengthen justice systems across the region. Yet, despite growing awareness, responses remain fragmented. Survivors continue to face persistent barriers to protection and justice, while weak enforcement allows perpetrators to evade accountability.

Across Asia, trafficking in persons manifests in varied but interconnected forms. In South Asia, poverty, conflict, and social inequalities drive the exploitation of women and children, trafficked for bonded labour, sexual abuse, forced begging, and domestic servitude. In Southeast Asia, trafficking and cybercrime converge in new, insidious ways. Young, multilingual victims seeking employment are trafficked into guarded compounds and coerced into operating online scams under threats of violence. In East Asia, forced marriages, exploitative labour, and sexual abuse disproportionately affect women and migrant workers, many without access to justice or protection.

In the face of such injustice, the Church is called to respond with clarity and conviction. As communities of faith rooted in the Gospel, churches must bear prophetic witness against exploitation and stand in solidarity with those who suffer its consequences. This includes offering sanctuary and pastoral care to survivors, advocating for legal and systemic reforms, and confronting the business models that drive trafficking.

The Christian Conference of Asia urges churches across the region to renew their commitment to justice and compassion. Churches must support trauma-informed and survivor-led approaches, amplify the voices of survivors, and work across borders to advocate for policy change. Collaboration with civil society is vital.

On this World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, let us affirm that advocacy is not optional but a sacred duty, one that requires initiating collective action to combat human trafficking. Together, we must tirelessly work to support survivors, dismantle the systems enabling exploitation, and uphold justice and human dignity.

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