

15<sup>th</sup> Edition

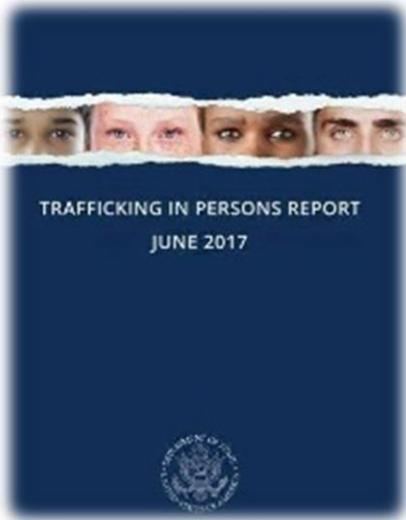
# Anti Human Trafficking Unit

## NEWSLETTER

# August 2017

## US TIPS Report

Since our last newsletter was published in March, the US Trafficking In Persons Report (TIPS Report) for 2017 has been released. Ireland has received a Tier One Rating, maintained for the 8th year in succession.



A Tier 1 rating indicates that a government has acknowledged the existence of human trafficking, made efforts to address the problem, complies with the TVPA's minimum standards, and has demonstrated progress in the past year.

The 2017 TIPs Report states that *“The government demonstrated serious and sustained efforts by implementing its second national action plan, significantly increasing its prosecutions, including prosecuting the country’s first case of forced labor under the trafficking law, and increasing funding for victim services”*.

As is the norm, the Report includes a series of recommendations be implemented going forward. These included improving victim identification and referral mechanisms, and in particular, increase efforts to identify and protect victims of labor trafficking, forced criminality, and asylum-seekers.

They also recommended that Ireland offer specialized accommodation to victims, particularly for women and traumatized victims, as well as establish an independent national rapporteur to help identify and address gaps in anti-trafficking strategy and efforts. The issues surrounding victim compensation were mentioned, with a recommendation to explore new possibilities, particularly for those involved in sex trafficking.

These recommendations are currently being examined as part of the Second National Action Plan’s agenda.

Ireland has received this Tier 1 status through effectively implementing strict laws against trafficking, and through the unwavering hard work and efforts made by State bodies and

partner agencies, such as An Garda Síochana, the Health Service Executive, the Legal Aid Board, The Workplace Relations Commission and INIS. The relationship that these State bodies hold with Ireland's extremely dedicated and cooperative Civil Society is also a key aspect in ensuring that the ongoing fight against the crime of trafficking is effective, consistent and moving forward at the highest level possible.

The full TIPS report can be found at <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2017/>

## GRETA Report

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, GRETA, the body responsible for monitoring implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, conducted a second evaluation of Ireland's implementation of the Convention at the end of 2016.

We received the draft Greta report for Ireland in July, and the AHTU is currently assembling a response to the recommendations and queries outlined within this.



The full report, together with Ireland's commentary, will be published towards the end of September

# Activities and Training

## WESTMANSTOWN

The AHTU spoke at a training day for Detective Sergeants attached to Special Crime Operations on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April.

This training involved talks from the AHTU (delivered by Paul Gunning), the HTICU, the Anti-Human Trafficking Team HSE, TUSLA and the WRC. There were further addresses made from relevant civil societies, such as Ruhama, the MRCl, the ICI and IOM Ireland.

The talks ranged from operational information for those that may not have yet encountered victims of trafficking during their work, to overviews on policy and the domestic and international legislation that encompasses the crime of trafficking in human beings.

There was a robust question and answer session after each group of talks and it overall it was felt that the training was extremely well received.

In June the AHTU also spoke at a 3 day training operated by and provided to An Garda Síochana, with the second day dedicated to services provided to victims of trafficking.

This presentation focused primarily on the AHTU's role and remit, with information on the strong relationship that has been maintained between AHTU and An Garda Síochana.

### DFAT Training

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, the AHTU assisted in delivered a briefing to officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on Human Trafficking and on the Employment of Domestic Workers in Diplomatic Households, as part of the DFAT's programme of pre-post training for officers going abroad in 2017.

Bobby Smyth from the AHTU spoke on trafficking in Ireland, international and domestic developments, key legislation and policy in Ireland and the role of Irish Missions in relation to trafficking. It is hoped that this training will serve to assist officers abroad, should indicators of trafficking become apparent.

## NGO Updates

### Invisible Traffick Ireland

We think that that Nelson Mandela's quote "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world!" summed up our thinking when we decided to develop and deliver a workshop on Human Trafficking to Transition Year students.



INVISIBLE  
TRAFFICK

Invisible Traffick believes it is vital that we teach our young people to be aware of the signs of Human Trafficking, and how to protect themselves from the perpetrators. We hope that by raising awareness through education, we can leave our young people less vulnerable.

We have offered this workshop to Secondary Schools in Co. Sligo and have had a very positive response. We are looking forward to running the workshops, in the various schools, throughout October.

We also aim to run a small competition to encourage students to get involved; and this should also give us some indication of how well they understood the subject content within the workshop.

## Immigrant Council of Ireland

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is currently involved in a number of national and transnational projects with a focus on assisting victims of trafficking.



The Moving On project is funded by the Department of Justice through Dormant Accounts Funding and involves collaboration between the Immigrant Council, Doras Luimni, NASC, and Business in the Community, and is supported closely by the HSE Anti-Human Trafficking Team.

The focus of the project is safer living for women in accommodation centres administered by the Reception and Integration Agency and increasing opportunities for the recovery and reintegration of trafficking victims. For this purpose, the project partners have developed training booklets and information leaflets for staff in accommodation centres, women living in those centres, and identified victims of trafficking. The materials have been developed by the project partners with support from the HSE Anti-Human Trafficking Team, Department of Justice Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Reception and Integration Agency, and Garda National Protective Services Bureau.

The next stage of the project is using these materials to train staff in the accommodation centres, including staff of the Department of Social Protection, on human trafficking and the appropriate treatment of victims, and to hold information sessions with women in the centres on human trafficking, as well as sessions for identified victims of trafficking on their rights and opportunities for reintegration.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is also a partner in the TRACKS project which is funded by the European Commission. The project involves partners from across Europe, including Forum Réfugiés-Cosi in France, the British Red Cross, and the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), and is supported by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

The project focuses on the special needs of asylum seeking victims of trafficking, including with respect to reception conditions, and how these can be met by all relevant stakeholders in the asylum process. As part of this work, the Immigrant Council is currently developing a training Toolkit for asylum practitioners and other actors who may encounter asylum seeking victims of trafficking as part of their work.

The Toolkit is designed to increase capacity around the issue of human trafficking and the special needs of victims of trafficking in the asylum process, and contains guidance on how those needs can be identified, the appropriate response, and referral information. Production of the Toolkit has been a collaborative effort between State and non-State actors, and has involved input from international organisations, NGOs, and State agencies in Ireland involved in the areas of asylum, human trafficking, and victim assistance. The Toolkit will be completed in the coming months.

## MRCI

As the National Assessment Centre for the identification of persons trafficked for labour exploitation in Ireland, the MRCI is seeing an increase in the number of cases being referred for assessment and other supports. We are continuing to identify cases across a number of sectors including restaurants, domestic work, car washes, cleaning, agriculture (including flower and fruit farms), circuses and cannabis production.

We are also extremely concerned about the levels of exploitation being uncovered in the Irish fishing industry and the growing number of cases with indicators of forced begging being seen across the country. These are two areas, in particular, which we feel require increased focus over the coming months.

Priorities in the second half of 2017 will include working together with stakeholders to further improve the identification system for suspected victims of trafficking throughout Ireland, as envisaged in the Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland.

We will also be working with La Strada International (LSI), a European NGO network, to examine access to remedies and compensation for trafficked persons. We will be assessing the current avenues for redress, in addition to the challenges and barriers being faced, with a view to identifying best practices and making recommendations for improvements.

As it stands, in order to try and obtain some level of compensation, survivors of trafficking have little choice but to submit claims for compensation to the Workplace Relations bodies for breaches of employment laws. Even in cases where survivors have the strength to proceed with a case, we often find that the traffickers have absconded or it is impossible to enforce the payment of any award made.



# AHTU Updates

## UNCAT

On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of July, a state delegation travelled to Geneva and presented Ireland's Second State Report under the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane, Degrading Treatment and Punishment (UNCAT). Ireland ratified this convention on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2002. A multinational UN Expert Committee commented on the report that had been submitted back in November 2015.

Principal Officer Greg n, of the Victims of Crime Office within the Department of Justice answered queries from the committee and spoke on behalf of the AHTU. He spoke on the publication and progress of the actions outlined in the Second National Action Plan, including the commencement of a fundamental examination of procedures for the identification of victims of trafficking and the development of a new victim identification procedure.

## Funding

The AHTU currently have an open call for submissions to avail of Dormant Accounts Funding for the 2017-2018 year. The Minister for Rural and Community Development recently approved the 2017 Dormant Accounts Action Plan.

The Dormant Accounts Fund is a scheme for the disbursement of unclaimed funds from accounts in credit institutions in Ireland. The fund is administered under the 2001 Dormant Accounts Act, together with the Unclaimed Life Assurance Policies Act 2003 and the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012 and is under the statutory function of the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs from July 2016.

The funding is available to apply for within two streams:



1. Victim support projects that address the needs of victims of human trafficking or persons vulnerable to human trafficking
2. Projects that raise awareness of the issue of trafficking in human beings

Full details of the application process can be found in on the blue blindfold website ([www.blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie) )

## Annual Reports

The Anti Human Trafficking Unit's 2015 annual report is currently available to view on <http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie/website/bbf/bbfweb.nsf/page/keystats-en>

The 2016 report due to be released very shortly.

## Eurojust's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report

Eurojust's Annual Report provides insights into the EU Agency's support to the Member States in the fight against serious cross-border crime, including human trafficking. Their 15<sup>th</sup> annual report was released recently.

Amongst other crimes, the report includes a section on trafficking, with information in relation to:

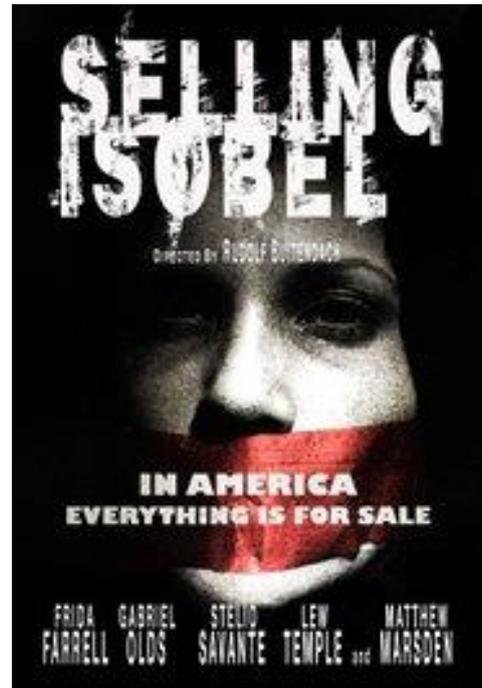
- Eurojust's support to national investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases
- The increase in the use of Joint Investigation Teams;
- Eurojust's operational support and strategic activities in the fight against trafficking in human beings.



# Media and Performance

## Selling Isobel

The American film "Selling Isobel" won the Best Non-European Independent Dramatic Feature in 2017. Directed by Rudolf Buitendach. It sheds light on the international trafficking industry by telling the account of a woman who is kidnapped, drugged and raped by different men over several days before finally escaping.



## Harvesting

A novel outlining the story of two girls who go through the trauma of trafficking was written by actress Lisa Harding and published in April of this year. It has received excellent reviews by many outlets for the realistic and honest voices it provides for victims of trafficking.

## Messages

If you have any queries regarding human trafficking, or you wish to contact us for information, events or awareness-raising materials, or to make a contribution to our next newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact any member of the AHTU through email at [ahtu\\_inbox@justice.ie](mailto:ahtu_inbox@justice.ie) or by phone on + 353 1 602 8878



**TO  
HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING**

**If you suspect you may know of a victim of human trafficking, an impartial and anonymous telephone hot-line for the confidential reporting of suspicions of trafficking is available from 9a.m to 9p.m. at 1800 25 00 25.**

**Alternatively, you can email your concerns or suspicions to [blueblindfold@garda.ie](mailto:blueblindfold@garda.ie).**

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