

Launch of Film Festival on trafficking in human beings

The Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D., today launched a one day film festival to co-incide with the EU Anti-Trafficking Day. The film festival sees the screening of two films - 'GHOSTS' to highlight issues associated with labour exploitation and 'TRAFFICKED' to raise awareness of the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The film festival is aimed at educating all those who attend including a number of transition year students and third level students about what is human trafficking, the indicators of trafficking and the action to be taken where there is a suspicion of human trafficking.

Speaking at the launch Minister Ahern said "*this initiative is important in terms of conveying the message through film of what human trafficking is and brings home how people fall prey to this insidious crime*". He re-iterated the Government's determination to stamp out this crime when he stated that *'there are up-to-date criminal offences in the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act, 2008 for trafficking persons for labour, sexual exploitation or removal of organs with maximum penalties of up to life imprisonment which can be imposed on conviction'*.

To find out more about human trafficking the Minister encouraged all those present to access the website 'www.blueblindfold.gov.ie'.

Note for Editors:

The film festival on human trafficking is being run in Ireland to co-incide with EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October, 2010. Two films will be screened at the event. Each film will be preceded by a music video entitled '**My Dangerous Loverboy**' (with an Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO) certification of 12A) directed by Virginia Health and backed by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). The music video addresses the issue of sexual exploitation of young girls and is targeted at late teenagers and young adults. The afternoon film on labour exploitation is '**Ghosts**' (with an IFCO certification of 15A) directed by Nick Broomfield. It deals with 23 Chinese people drowned in Morecombe Bay picking cockles. The main target audience for this film is Secondary School students from Transition Year upwards. The evening film exploring the underground sex trafficking industry in Ireland is '**Trafficked**' (with an IFCO certification of 18) directed by Ciaran O'Connor. Each film will be followed by a panel discussion on the issues comprising experts in the field. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Department of Justice and Law Reform, non-Governmental Organisations and International Organisations will have information stands at the event

Key measures being taken by the Government to tackle human trafficking include:

- The establishment in late 2008 of an Interdepartmental High Level Group was established to recommend the most appropriate and effective responses to trafficking in human beings.
- The establishment in 2008 of a dedicated Unit in the Department of Justice and Law Reform who is working with over 70 different governmental, non-governmental and other organisations nationally and internationally, through a wide range of consultative fora. These include working groups dealing with Development of a National Referral Mechanism, Awareness Raising and Training, Child Trafficking, Labour Exploitation Issues and Sexual Exploitation issues.
- The establishment of dedicated units within the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and the Legal Aid Board (LAB) in 2009 and in 2010 in the Health Service Executive (HSE).
- The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 which provides penalties of up to life imprisonment in respect of these offences.
- A 60 day recovery and reflection period in the State for alleged victims of human trafficking and a further 6 months temporary residence, renewable to enable an alleged victim to assist the Garda Síochána in any investigation or prosecution.
- Publication in 2009 of a *National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Human Beings in Ireland 2009-2012*.
- Training for police, trainers in organisations and specialised training for the staff of the Legal Aid Board who are providing legal aid and advice to potential and suspected victims of human trafficking.
- Awareness raising measures including the blue blindfold campaign, articles on human trafficking in numerous publications and presentations at conferences.

Arrangements for protection of victims

- accommodation is provided by the Reception and Integration Agency,
- medical care including access to emergency medical treatment/care planning, psychological and material assistance is provided by the HSE,
- repatriation is organised by the International Organisation for Migration
- legal aid and advice is provided by the Legal Aid Board
- translation and interpretation services are provided, when appropriate,
- access to education for children is also provided.

Ireland has now ratified both the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The former came into effect for Ireland on 17 July, 2010 and the latter was lodged on 13 July, 2010 and will take effect on 1 November, 2010.