



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

As delivered Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 7, 2024

Special Representative Johnstone, dear Kari, welcome back to the Permanent Council.

Thank you for this thorough and substantive report. As you outlined, your team has completed an extraordinary breadth of work in the past year and seen tangible results in the fight against trafficking in persons.

We strongly support your promotion of trauma-informed approaches to victim identification and assistance – recognizing signs of trauma and integrating knowledge of it into policies, procedures, practices, and settings to resist re-traumatization. We fully endorse your focus on elevating and incorporating the voices of survivor leaders, a vital practice to ensure policy design includes the intentional leadership, expertise, and input of survivors.

Your office does not shy away from the complex or emerging facets of human trafficking. Your insights on the use of artificial intelligence, and on the nexus between marginalized communities and trafficking in persons are much needed.

The United States is proud to provide over \$2 million toward your office's extra-budgetary activities. These projects – preventing trafficking in supply chains, responding to technology-facilitated trafficking, and developing and delivering simulation-based exercises – are pioneering and ambitious. They are also examples of what can be achieved when we invest in your unique mandate.

We further welcome the extension through 2027 of the project to prevent and respond to trafficking amid increased flows of refugees from Ukraine. The continued work: to update the "Be Safe" campaign; publications for first-line responders; and the robust conferences on civil society, anti-trafficking hotlines, and strengthening criminal justice actions show the ongoing need for the project as Russia continues its aggression against Ukraine.

Thank you, also, for sharing precisely how your office has reduced, postponed, and adjusted its work given the lack of an adopted budget. Unfortunately, your Office – like the field missions, the independent institutions, and all others in the Secretariat – faces significant operational difficulties due to severe financial constraints.

The inability of participating States to adopt a Unified Budget has placed undue strain on all of these components' abilities to effectively carry out their mandates, affecting everything from staffing and resources to program implementation. We once again urge all participating States to join consensus to adopt the Unified Budget as soon as possible. We have a golden opportunity to adopt both the 2024 and 2025 Unified Budgets in the coming weeks and to put the organization on a stable footing. In this connection, I was delighted to hear the Russian Federation's assertion last week that it would welcome the adoption of a Unified Budget.

Dr. Johnstone, the United States recognizes and appreciates your and your team's assistance to participating States in implementing their OSCE commitments. Your successes over the past year showcase the value of your office and the OSCE.

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