

**Statement of Ambassador Cindy Dyer**  
**Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**“Examining U.S. and Global Commitments to Combatting Human Trafficking”**  
**June 22, 2023**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Department of State’s efforts to combat human trafficking, and for your leadership on human trafficking. I especially want to thank Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Senators Kaine and Rubio for sponsoring the International Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023, which recently advanced through this committee.

Just last week, Secretary of State Blinken presented the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report. The TIP Report, which my Office produces annually, contains narratives detailing global anti-trafficking efforts, including those of 188 countries and territories worldwide, including the United States. It is the world’s most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-trafficking efforts—including our own—and reflects the U.S. government’s commitment to global leadership on this key human rights, law enforcement, and national security issue.

**Overview of 2023 TIP Report**

This year’s report contains some good news. Across all data points included in the global tally—tracking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified—there were increases reported compared to prior years. This progress is due to real changes in policies and ongoing improvements in governments’ collection and reporting of law enforcement data. Convictions continued to increase, and identifications of victims and potential victims increased by nearly 25,000 – although neither was back to pre-pandemic levels.

This year’s TIP Report includes 20 countries with ranking downgrades, including Slovenia and Namibia from Tier 1, and the Dominican Republic and Egypt among 11 other governments down from Tier 2 to the Tier 2 Watch List. There were 24 whose ranking improved, including two countries—Denmark and the Seychelles—upgraded to Tier 1.

There were also 19 upgrades to Tier 2. Five countries were downgraded to Tier 3 and three countries were upgraded from Tier 3. Nineteen countries and territories remained on Tier 3, for a total of 24 – the second-highest number since the report began. Tier 3 included 11 countries with an ongoing finding that they engaged in a “policy or pattern” of state-sponsored human trafficking.

While the tier rankings are important, the TIP Report is, above all, the U.S. government’s principal diplomatic and diagnostic tool to guide relations with foreign governments on human trafficking, with the narrative and recommendations a roadmap to improvement, and the rankings a means to encourage governments to increase and improve their anti-trafficking efforts year after year.

The TIP Report also includes an introductory essay on how effective efforts to combat human trafficking require partnership to complement and support the “3P” paradigm of prosecution, protection, and prevention, a topic I shall return to in a moment. The Report also includes special-interest boxes on a variety of timely subjects and emerging trends we have documented, including forced criminality in cyber scam operations, unscrupulous online labor recruitment, the challenges faced by survivors who are boys and men, and audit deception.

Cyber scams in Southeast Asia—including in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and the Philippines—are a growing form of forced criminality affecting victims worldwide; the 2023 TIP Report narratives reveal that victims from at least 35 countries and areas have been identified. The scope of these operations is shocking. An International Justice Mission report, for example, estimates that up to 100,000 people in Cambodia are working in scam operations. These schemes often target young and educated professionals, including Americans, who respond to virtual offers of employment, only to have traffickers seize their passports and coerce them into enticing strangers online to join fake cryptocurrency investment schemes, deposit money into gaming accounts, or buy into false romance and investment schemes.

I spoke about the need to address forced criminality amid cyber scams at the OSCE’s 23<sup>rd</sup> Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons in April, and earlier this month, Principal Deputy Director Kari Johnstone spoke at the OSCE and Council of Europe about this growing menace. TIP Office staff recently returned from Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand, where they learned more about these cyber scam

operations and facilitated discussions around the scam centers at a Mekong dialogue organized by the Stimson Center and our East Asian and Pacific Affairs bureau. Through our Emergency Victim Assistance program, our foreign assistance has helped 208 victims from 16 countries and areas return home after being exploited in such centers and get urgent care they need. Our new programming in the region will focus on preventative measures and protection for the thousands of victims being held there, including a crucial plus up, from existing funds, for emergency victim assistance. And we are focused, as always, on promoting a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach, so that victims are not inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts they committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

### **TIP Office Foreign Assistance Priorities**

Thanks to sustained support from Congress, in particular the groundbreaking Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations, including, we hope, one later this Congress, the Department has a well-established set of tools to draw upon in the fight against human trafficking.

Among these tools is our foreign assistance. The TIP Office is proud to bring targeted resources to support grassroots, national, and international nongovernmental organizations, and government-NGO partnerships. Since 2001, the TIP Office has leveraged more than \$700 million in foreign assistance to support nearly 1,000 anti-trafficking projects to address sex trafficking and labor trafficking worldwide.

Our work has impact. For example, in just the past year, TIP Office assistance provided more than 15,000 victims, including more than 1,500 children, with direct services such as shelter, healthcare, counseling, legal assistance, or education. Nearly 5,000 victims of trafficking received legal services, increasing their access to justice. Our Office's programs trained more than 6,000 criminal-justice actors, contributing to the adjudication of 148 cases with convictions, and strengthening 73 anti-trafficking laws and policies worldwide.

The TIP Office's Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership program is an innovative and effective program that harnesses the strengths of governments and civil society in advancing the fight against child trafficking. CPC partnerships are multilayered and sustained partnerships between the United States and

foreign governments. After a rigorous review of potential countries and establishing an actionable theory of change, the U.S. and partner governments will make non-binding commitments to provide financial and/or in-kind resources in a sustained effort to fight child trafficking via projects that engage all relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement, service providers, the judiciary, teachers, health officials, and survivors. These collaborations, with partner governments investing resources alongside the U.S. government, have been effective from Peru to Ghana to the Philippines and beyond.

Our Office is building on this model, incorporating lessons learned along the way, to leverage foreign assistance through sustained government-to-government partnerships to spur progress to combat human trafficking in more countries. We call this new initiative the ***Partnership to Prevent Trafficking in Persons***. Through existing allocations, the program will focus on all victims of trafficking, not only children, and support progress across the 3 Ps of Protection, Prosecution, and Prevention. We are in active discussions to kick this program off. We anticipate putting out a Notice of Funding Opportunity soon to jump start this exciting new endeavor and hope to sign an arrangement with a partner government by the end of this calendar year.

### **2023 TIP Report Introduction – Partnership**

Turning back to this year’s TIP Report, the introduction focuses on a critical fourth “P”—partnership—which has long been essential to the success of the “3P” framework.

Partnership flows through and infuses all our efforts. Human trafficking is a global threat that is beyond the capacity of a single organization, agency, sector, nation, or even international organization to address. Therefore, effective strategic partnerships must be the lifeblood of any successful effort, harnessing the perspectives, knowledge, and capabilities of a wide variety of actors, from whole-of-government to the private sector to the community of trafficking survivors. Our introduction this year highlights examples of these successful partnerships that are as instructional as they are inspirational.

### *Partnerships with Survivors*

Collaborating with survivors as experts and equal partners is critical to understanding the realities of human trafficking and establishing effective victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent anti-trafficking policies and strategies. The United States, with its Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network, has served as a role model for many countries. For example, in 2022, Israel established a national anti-trafficking advisory committee that includes survivor members and advises on a range of topics. Other countries, including Bangladesh, Botswana, Finland, Iceland, North Macedonia, and Uganda have engaged survivors in national anti-trafficking efforts within the past two years. Countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States have committed to engaging individuals with lived experience through their national action plans. Furthermore, as noted within the country narrative, during this reporting period the Government of Australia piloted a survivor advisory council, which provided guidance on government policies, including review of the legislative framework.

### *Intragovernmental/Interagency Cooperation*

Governments that act as a splintered collection of fractured agencies and bureaus are nowhere near as effective as governments that act in a unified and cohesive manner: Interagency and intragovernmental coordination are essential. Adopting a whole-of-government approach enhances opportunities for government agencies to partner with one another to implement and enforce national trafficking laws more effectively, provide protection and services to survivors, coordinate prevention activities, address information gaps, incorporate survivor- and trauma-informed approaches, plan and pace strategic national initiatives, and streamline or coordinate on overlapping efforts.

In Argentina, for example, the government's Federal Council for the Fight against Human Trafficking and Exploitation promotes intragovernmental coordination on anti-trafficking efforts. The Council's biannual meetings facilitate collaboration between provincial and federal anti-trafficking authorities and allow representatives of Argentina's 24 jurisdictions to review the activities of the federal government's Executive Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking and Exploitation of People and the Protection and Assistance of Victims.

Here in the United States, Secretary of State Blinken leads the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, a cabinet-level entity that includes representation from across the U.S. government. The task force's Senior Policy Operating Group, which I have the privilege of chairing, convenes throughout the year to help coordinate and implement the work. Through both of these mechanisms, the U.S. government is committed to implementing the U.S. National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and ensuring that this fight remains a top priority.

### *Civil Society Partnerships*

Governmental partnerships with civil society, from grassroots community organizations to international non-governmental organizations, are also essential for combating human trafficking worldwide. These civil-society groups often have critical know-how, community relationships, and on-the-ground expertise that governments do not. For example, in Niger, the Government's National Agency for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons and the Illicit Transport of Migrants works closely with IOM on victim referral and protection efforts, including by collaborating to implement and train frontline officials on the national-referral mechanism.

The last few years have been particularly challenging and have further illuminated the importance of robust partnerships. Human trafficking is a global menace, a crime that exists in every country and affects people of every age, ethnicity, and gender, with historically and systematically marginalized groups often at greatest risk. The COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, Russia's war against Ukraine, and disruption caused by climate change and Russia's nefarious impacts on global food and energy supplies have exacerbated poverty and economic inequality, heightened job insecurity in many sectors, diminished access to justice and services, disrupted global supply chains, and contributed to new waves of risky migration. All of these factors, and others, have heightened the risk of trafficking around the world.

But we are not helpless. Today, more than ever, the United States' sustained leadership and commitment to combating trafficking in all its forms is critical.

As Ambassador, I am focused on implementing key actions to advance an effective anti-trafficking response, including addressing human trafficking in the

context of the impact of Russia's war; documenting and decrying human trafficking in Xinjiang and elsewhere in the People's Republic of China as well as the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative; engaging with survivors and underserved communities; and preventing human trafficking in global supply chains and in the U.S. government's procurement of goods and services.

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, thank you again for holding today's hearing and this Committee's steadfast commitment to combating human trafficking.