

Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Trafficking in persons

In recent years, the trafficking in human beings has reached frightening proportions. In fact, the numbers of reported victims are on a steady increase worldwide since 2010.

The trafficking in persons presents a crime which we strongly condemn as it heavily violates both The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the consensus reached at the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Such being the case, the elimination of modern slavery internationally and in the United Kingdom continues to be of the highest priority for the United Kingdom.

As a means to counteract human trafficking, the Modern Slavery Act was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom and came into force in March 2015 to consolidate slavery and trafficking offences, and to allow for transparency in prosecuting the trafficking in persons. Thus, the maximum sentence for offenders was raised to life imprisonment and several measures were established to further protect and support victims of human trafficking.

While it is suspected that there is human trafficking within the borders of the United Kingdom, it is mainly a destination country for victims of human trafficking from Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa.

In 2017 data from the National Crime Agency (NCA) showed that the potential victims were from 116 countries. In response, we are intensifying bilateral engagements with the countries from where the United Kingdom receives a high number of modern slavery victims. Human trafficking is a global challenge that demands a global solution, which is why we work in close partnership with those source countries to be able to differentiate the various profiles of perpetrators and victims, and to better understand the reasons and the context that leads to defenceless people being exploited and trafficked to the United Kingdom.

We are also committed to supporting countries in their action to reduce vulnerabilities to slavery, and to facilitate an effective response and victim support.

Furthermore, the United Kingdom seeks to establish partnerships with countries which have a high prevalence of slavery to determine a course in which the United Kingdom could support those countries in the elimination of human trafficking and exploitation.

There are many international structures to drive the eradication of human trafficking forward, however the application and enforcement of those has been poor and lacks conjoined resources and coordinated action. Hence, the United Kingdom argues for better international cooperation and coordination in order to fulfill the agreed commitments made under SDG Target 8.7. (Sustainable Development Goals), for those goals can only be reached in a joined effort.