

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
30 July 2016

All over the world, tens of millions of people are desperately seeking refuge, many of them far from home and even farther from safety. Migrants and refugees face imposing physical obstacles and bureaucratic barriers. Sadly, they are also vulnerable to human rights violations and exploitation by human traffickers.

Human traffickers prey on the most desperate and vulnerable. To end this inhumane practice, we must do more to shield migrants and refugees -- and particularly young people, women and children -- from those who would exploit their yearnings for a better, safer and more dignified future. We must govern migration in a safe and rights-based way, create sufficient and accessible pathways for the entry of migrants and refugees, and ultimately tackle the root causes of the conflicts -- extreme poverty, environmental degradation and other crises which force people across borders, seas and deserts.

These issues will be central to the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, to be held in New York on 19 September 2016. This meeting aims amongst other goals to win renewed commitment for intensified efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and refugees, ensure protection and assistance for the victims of trafficking and of abusive smuggling, as well as all those who suffer human rights violations and abuse in the course of large movements, and promote respect for international law, standards and frameworks.

I call on every nation -- whether country of origin, transit or destination -- to recognize our shared responsibility. As a first step, we need a strong legal basis for action. I encourage all States to adopt and implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocol on human trafficking as well as all core international human rights instruments.

On this World Day against Trafficking in Persons, I urge everyone to recommit to protect, respect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants and refugees. Creating and supporting well-governed, safe and human rights-based migration and asylum procedures will be an important step towards ending the abhorrent practice of profiting from human despair and misery.