

**Testimony of Ambassador Luis CdeBaca
Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking**

**Before the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs**

**Hearing on U.S. Assistance and Transnational Crime
May 7, 2014**

Thank you Madam Chair, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the subcommittee for the invitation to testify. I hope our conversation today will demonstrate the Administration's commitment to fighting human trafficking in all its forms, that the resources behind the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons are taxpayer dollars well spent, and that we must not back down from our efforts to combat this horrific crime.

As today's hearing will be dealing with a few different types of trafficking, I think it's important to take a step back and describe what we mean when we use the term "human trafficking" or "trafficking in persons."

In the U.S. government, we use human trafficking as an umbrella term, meaning all of the conduct involved in reducing a person to or holding a person in a state of compelled service, whether for labor or commercial sex. Though movement may sometimes occur in human trafficking cases, it is not a necessary element of the crime. This is a crime of exploitation. And whether a victim is a woman trapped as a domestic worker, a man enslaved on a fishing boat, or a child forced to beg on the street or prostituted in a brothel, the common thread in cases of human trafficking is the deprivation of one person's freedom by another. That's why a fitting description of this crime is modern slavery.

When we look at it for what it is—slavery—our moral obligation to fight this crime is clear. Slavery has no place in the 21st century.

Fighting modern slavery is also a strategic imperative. Modern slavery undermines the rule of law and feeds instability. It breeds corruption, fuels

transnational criminal networks, and tainted supply chains that drive the global economy.

Our office is on the cutting edge of efforts to meet this challenge, and today, I'd like to talk about two of our office's major functions that really provide the biggest bang for the buck.

First, the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, and specifically, the tier-ranking system established by Congress in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA).

To put it succinctly: the *Report* works.

It works by measuring governments' efforts to fight trafficking using a set of "minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking" established by Congress. These standards, consistent with international law, have contributed to the rapid growth in activity to combat human trafficking. The Report identifies governments that meet all these standards as Tier 1; governments that are making significant efforts to eliminate trafficking, but do not meet all the standards as Tier 2; governments that are making significant efforts, but those efforts are not increasing compared to the previous year or their ranking is based on future promises of increased activity over the coming year, as Tier 2 Watch List; and governments that are not making significant efforts to eliminate trafficking as Tier 3.

The Department places each country in the Report onto one of the four tiers based on the extent of each government's efforts to reach compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. Moreover, in the Report, every country is ranked against itself in terms of its progress, and against its capacity to deal with this crime – not against other countries.

The TIP Report's tier ranking system, accompanied by the detailed country narratives, has been extremely effective in motivating governments to implement measures and improve institutions for combating trafficking and has enabled them more effectively to fight this serious crime.

Time and time again, we've seen governments change course dramatically when faced with a downgrade or confronted by a tough assessment. Time and time again, political leaders and advocates have credited this *Report* with spurring governments to action.

In the 14 years since the passage of the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* (Palermo Protocol) and the simultaneous passage of the TVPA, 159 countries have become States Parties to the Palermo Protocol. And, thanks in no small part to the Report, more than 100 have enacted anti-trafficking laws and numerous countries have established specialized law enforcement units, set up trafficking victim assistance mechanisms, and launched public awareness campaigns.

To be clear, the *Report* is not used only as a tool to name and shame, as some have suggested. Rather, at its core the *Report* is a tool to engage foreign governments. Every single narrative includes recommendations for what governments can be doing better to tackle this problem. And since 2010, we've shined the same bright light on the United States that we do on nearly every other country in the world. After all, no country is immune from this crime.

This *Report* is also a tool for us—it shows us where the effects of modern slavery are felt hardest, and it guides how we target our anti-trafficking foreign assistance.

That's the second issue I'd like to briefly discuss.

Since 2002, my office had funded 835 projects across the globe worth over \$216 million. Every year, however, the needs for foreign assistance far exceed our approximately \$19 million in programming funds. So we seek to have the greatest impact possible with the funds available to us. We also look to invest in efforts that are bringing innovative and scalable approaches to this challenge. And most important, we support efforts that directly provide support and services to trafficking victims.

To people.

To people like the women victimized by modern slavery in Sierra Leone, who now have access to shelter services for the first time thanks to the work of one of our grantees. Like the men who are now recognized as victims of trafficking and receive assistance in Bangladesh through one of our projects. Prior to the work of these organizations and these projects, such traditionally underserved populations had limited to no access to services.

To people like South and Southeast Asian women enslaved as domestic workers in the Middle East. Like the children in West Africa forced to beg on the city streets.

Like the individuals around the world who are now getting the emergency help they need because of our support to various service providers.

There are many more stories I could tell about the work our Office is doing around the world. But sadly there are too many of these stories that will never even be written.

In last year's *TIP Report*, we found roughly that only 40,000 victims had been identified during the previous year. Yet by some estimates there are approximately 27 million people subject to forms of modern slavery today.

We know that we can't wave a wand or write a check and make this problem go away.

But there are advocates and partners all over the world making a difference that, with a little help from us, can have an even greater and broader impact.

With the continued support of Congress, I'm confident that we will continue forward on this righteous path, and we will grow nearer to our shared vision—a world free from slavery.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer your questions.

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