

STATEMENT FROM MERCY GLOBALACTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mercy International Associational* (MIA) is fully committed to working with the global network of all those dedicated to eradicating the heinous crime of Human Trafficking (HT). MIA has a membership 7,500 Sisters, 5,000 Associates and over 250,000 partners in ministry, in 40+ countries. Our commitment to working with victims of HT is fired by the inspiration of the Gospel and Catherine McAuley, our foundress. We applaud the tremendous contribution Pope Francis and world religious leaders are making, to raise awareness about trafficking and to work towards its eradication.

There are around 30 million children, women and men caught in the vicious grip of modern day slavery throughout the world. Every country serves as a source, transit or destination for this crime, defined by the United Nations as control of a person through fraud or coercion and physical or psychological means, to exploit them. This occurs under the general headings of sexual and or labour exploitation; and or organ removal.

In March 2014 Pope Francis with leaders of the Anglican and Muslim world and Andrew Forrest, launched the Global Freedom Network* (GFN) in Rome. On December 2nd this group invited representatives from all major world religions, to sign their 'Declaration' stating that trafficking is a crime against humanity and pledging to eradicate it by 2020!

What could I do to raise awareness and to eradicate Human Trafficking?

1. Keep informed about HT locally and nationally. Call the dedicated number of your local police or law enforcement, if you think a person is being exploited.
2. Check where your groceries, clothes, household items come from. Avoid buying products, which may be produced by exploited and trafficked workers. Wherever possible buy 'Fair Trade' and locally produced products.
3. Challenge your government to address root causes of poverty; and discrimination against women and girls. Insist on human rights based policies to address global finance, trade, land and development; to ensure fair employment for everyone.
4. Befriend asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers in your local church or community. Their story may well reflect exploitation of some form.
5. Pray for groups involved in supporting trafficked victims e.g. Non Governmental Organisations (NGO). Offer to volunteer and or to support them financially.
6. Celebrate the feast of St. Josephine Bakita - a former slave - on February 8th, designated as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against HT.
7. Follow the 'social media feeds' of organisations like MIA* and NGOs working to end HT, to keep updated and to get involved whenever possible.

Please share this statement widely, so we eradicate human trafficking in our lifetime!

MIA Global Action Team

January 11th 2015

* www.mercyworld.org especially Global Action – Opposing Human Trafficking

* <http://www.globalfreedomnetwork.org> and <http://www.walkfreefoundation.org/>

* <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/> UN *Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking*