



***Challenges and Shared Responsibilities of Human Trafficking:
Causes and Consequences***, by Archbishop Bernardito Auza
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Origin, Transit and Destination: Global Perspective

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists, Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today, as we reflect together on the disturbing issue of the trafficking in human beings and commit ourselves, individually and collectively, to take up our responsibility in doing everything we can to prevent it, to protect those vulnerable to it, to prosecute those who have abused their fellow human beings in it, and to partner with each other to address the various issues that have allowed this plague to proliferate.

According to recent estimates, 21 to 36 million people, including more than five million children, are victims of human trafficking, forced labor, or other forms of modern slavery. It's a situation that has justly galvanized the international community. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, three separate Targets were dedicated to eliminating this humanitarian ignominy within the next fifteen years. These commit the United Nations and Member States expeditiously to "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation" (5.2) "take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking" (8.7) and "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children" (16.2).

The fight against modern slavery is a particular priority of the diplomatic work of the Holy See and a pastoral urgency of the Catholic Church. The Holy See has long spoken out against the evil of human trafficking and through the dedicated work of so many Catholic religious institutes, national and diocesan programs, and groups of committed faithful, the Catholic Church has sought to fight to address its various causes, care for those it victimizes, wake people up to the disgrace, and work with anyone and everyone to try to eliminate it.

The Holy See's involvement is not new. The Second Vatican Council condemned it as an infamy that poisons human society, debases perpetrators and victims and dishonors the Creator (GS 27). John Paul II gave a lengthy address in 2002 about halting what he called this "iniquitous trade" that is "an intrinsic violation of human dignity and rights." Pope Benedict XVI focused his 2006 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on the "scourge of trafficking in human beings" where traffickers deceive those in vulnerable situations "who often do not even vaguely suspect what awaits them."

But it has been Pope Francis who has captured the world's attention for his aggressive and incessant denunciation of this social cancer and his attempt to wake up the world with him to eliminate it. He dedicated part of his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2015 to it. He wrote about it in his encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* and in his pastoral plan for the Church today entitled *The Joy of the Gospel*. He devoted the entirety of his 2015 Message for the World Day of Peace to the subject, making it a key priority of international diplomacy for the Holy See. He has spoken about it repeatedly to the diplomats accredited to the Holy See, to religious leaders, social scientists and scholars, mayors and judges, law enforcement leaders and women religious and almost anyone else who will listen, likewise sending messages on the subject to various conferences across the globe.

In the last month alone, he has given two more powerful addresses on the subject, to the Santa Marta Group (Oct 27), an international collaboration of religious leaders and international police chiefs

named after Pope Francis' residence, and to RENATE (Nov 2), an association of religious women in Europe networked against trafficking and exploitation in which he said that one of the worst "open wounds in our world" is the "trade in human beings, a modern form of slavery, which violates the God-given dignity of so many of our brothers and sisters and constitutes a true crime against humanity" and called us all to a "concerted commitment, active and constant ... to eliminate the causes of this complex phenomenon, [and] meet, assist and accompany individuals who fall into the snares of trafficking ... whose dignity, physical and psychic integrity and even life is robbed." Spurring them on to continue their work, Pope Francis applied Jesus' words about the Last Judgment in St. Matthew's Gospel to the situation of human trafficking, saying Jesus could say to each of us, "I was abused, exploited, enslaved ... and you rescued me."

Those who study and work against modern slavery often break down the causes of this phenomenon into things that must be done at those places from which victims originate, at those places where victims end up and are endlessly exploited, and in the transit between starting point and destination. That's the topic I've been asked to address briefly from a global perspective.

How do people get ensnared in trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced labor, organ removal or other forms of exploitation? Extensive studies show that their situations of origin make them particularly vulnerable. They live in places of situations of violence, conflict and war, of endemic poverty, of lack of employment, of environmental disaster, of rampant organized crime and political and police corruption, of inadequate or even non-existent legal and safe migration processes, making them gullible to smugglers who are in fact traffickers. ... In brief, the victims of human trafficking come from places and situations wherein nobody of us wants to be and from which all of us without exception would flee.

Added to these root causes of trafficking in persons are familial and personal elements that contribute to their vulnerability. In fact, many

of them come from familial and educational situations that have not formed and empowered them to resist the root causes of trafficking and they are susceptible to recruitment through fraud, deception, payment, coercion, and abduction.

To fight trafficking at the place of origin involves not only awareness campaigns and a concerted effort against the messages, methods and means of recruiters, but the type of development assistance and national and international legal reforms that can effectively decrease their vulnerability.

We must likewise study and sever the exploitative chains and networks that transport them to where they will be abused. As we have seen in the global migration crisis, for example, many human traffickers use the guise of smuggling to ensnare their victims. There are huge differences between smuggling and trafficking: smuggling involves consent whereas trafficking involves no consent or consent under coercion, deception or abuse; smuggling stops at the migrant's arrival (or after they are all paid up), whereas trafficking involves ongoing exploitation; smuggling profits through transportation and facilitation of illegal entry of a person into another country, which trafficking profits through exploitation; and smuggling always involves transnationality, whereas trafficking does not have to cross national borders.

But the overlaps between smuggling and trafficking make it possible for the former to conceal and make possible the latter. Traffickers, for example, can present victims with putative opportunities that echo the promises of smugglers, ask migrants to pay fees for their transport, and often use the same routes and transportation methods. The fight against human trafficking therefore involves addressing the root causes that lead so many in desperate situations to turn to smugglers as well as fighting the exploitative business of migrant smuggling, which like other branches of organized crime, is likewise just a cover for the modern slave trade.

In general, transit countries are chosen not just for their geographical location relative to places of origin and destination, but also for their

weak border controls, proximity to destination countries, corruption of immigration officials, or affiliation with organized crime groups that are involved in trafficking. Traffickers generally transport people over easy borders.

From final the root causes of people's vulnerability to trafficking in persons, to stopping or at least interrupting the easy transport and passage of trafficked persons through porous borders or corrupt border officials, perhaps the greatest amount of resolve needs to be given to places of destination, insofar as it is demand in developed countries or among the richer parts of developing countries for treating sex as a commodity and to lower the expenses of goods at any cost that pulls the whole sordid chain of human trafficking:

First, since there is no market if there is no demand, we need to lower and eliminate as much as possible the demand, the market, by means of education and social shaming and then prosecute those who seek to increase and supply that demand by enslaving others;

Second, we also need to address the dehumanization that occurs, often as a result of xenophobia, that allows people to look the other way;

Third, in places of destination, we need to get better, faster and more effective at liberating victims from sweatshops, streets and wherever else they are held in bondage. That will involve, among other things, educating those in the transportation and health industries who will often come into direct contact with them, so that they can spot victims of trafficking and contact those who can help them.

Fourth, we need to look at legislation and policy that traffickers use psychologically to continue to manipulate their victims, like the extortion of threatening deportation if they don't continue to appease the traffickers, or penalties established by laws that would be slapped against a person who entered a country illegally, whether trafficked or not. These two cases are very strong in discouraging victims from reporting to the competent authorities, this becoming against their will a sort of "accomplice" to their traffickers. Research shows that

prosecuting those who exploit rather than those who are exploited has far greater success in driving down demand.

Fifth, we need to provide more victims services to help them recover from the trauma and be integrated in society.

When Pope Francis spoke to the UN General Assembly in September 2015, he stressed that now is the time not just for words, but for joint action. “Our world demands of all government leaders,” he emphasized, “concrete steps and immediate measures for ... putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of ... human trafficking, ... the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, [and] slave labor, including prostitution.... We need to ensure that our institutions are truly effective in the struggle against all these scourges.”

That effort, however, must include not just the international community and states, but also intergovernmental organizations, businesses, civil society and faith based organizations – in short everyone. “We ought to recognize that we are facing a global phenomenon that exceeds the competence of any one community or country,” the Pope stated in his 2015 World Day of Peace Message. “In order to eliminate it, we need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself.

For this reason, the Pope made this appeal: “I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will, and all those near or far, including the highest levels of civil institutions, who witness the scourge of contemporary slavery, not to become accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity. ... The globalization of indifference, which today burdens the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters, requires all of us to forge a new worldwide solidarity and fraternity capable of giving them new hope,” of emancipating them and of integrating survivors into society in accordance with their human dignity.

This is our challenge and shared responsibility at the level of origin, transit and destination of this troubling phenomenon.

Thank you for your kind attention.