

## **WHAT IS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS?**

**Trafficking in Persons** is defined in **The BAHAMAS' TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION) ACT, 2008**, as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."

A **Victim** is anyone, 'in respect of whom the offence of trafficking in persons is committed.'

A **Trafficker** is one who 'engages in or conspires to engage in, or attempts to engage in, or otherwise facilitates another person to engage in "trafficking in persons."

## **WHO IS TRAFFICKED?**

The weak, poor and vulnerable are usually trafficked. Although men and women are trafficked, more women and children fall into the clutches of cruel traffickers. *At any one time, 2.4 million people suffer the misery of this humiliating and degrading crime with women accounting for 55-60 per cent of all trafficking victims detected globally. Collectively women and girls account for about 75 per cent of persons trafficked. Twenty-seven per cent of all victims detected globally are children. Generally, the traffickers tend to be an adult male and is a resident of the country in which they operate.*

## **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TYPES OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS?**

In the United States Annual [Trafficking in Persons Report 2013](#), the US Department of State listed eight major types of trafficking, including trafficking related to:

- **Sex-trafficking**
- **Child sex trafficking**
- **Forced labour**
- **Bonded labour or debt bondage**
- **Involuntary domestic servitude**
- **Forced child labour**
- **Unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers**

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS THRIVE?**

- Some of the conditions under which Trafficking in Persons thrive include: Unemployment and lack of economic opportunities in areas or countries where victims are trafficked
- Growing inequality between and within countries;
- Inadequate information for potential migrants about migration risks and opportunities
- Increased freedom of movement between states
- Improved and more affordable cross-border transport
- Restrictions on legal immigration to developed countries
- The profitability (to organised criminals) of forced labour and sexual exploitation
- Market demand for sexual services and cheap labour
- The vulnerability of migrant workers (including uncertain legal status and discrimination)
- Ethnic, social and gender discrimination
- Political and humanitarian crises driving the supply of migrants

## WHAT ARE SOME CLUES TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE IS A TIP VICTIM?

The victim may exhibit the following behaviours:

- *Being controlled*
- *Accompanied or kept under surveillance when taken to a doctor, hospital or clinic for treatment;*
- *Unable to leave premises, unless escorted or by special permission*
- *Needs permission to change one's employ*
- *Has unexplained physical bruises*
- *Is fearful or depressed*
- *Needs an interpreter to communicate (be extremely observant because traffickers may additionally act as interpreters)*
- *Is not in possession of his/her own passport or other forms of identification or work permits*

## WHAT ARE KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK A TIP VICTIM?

Most trafficking victims are not very trusting of others and find grave difficulty in confiding in others and are kept in bondage through a combination of fear, intimidation, abuse, and psychological controls. TIP victims are modern slaves. However their external chains and physical scars have been substituted by internal torture, economic depravity and social shame. Always proceed with caution and do not take matters totally into your own hands. Remember you may not be aware of the potential danger to yourself, the victim or his or her family. Alert the proper authorities.

Victims will not voluntarily give information about their status because they may have been threatened or cruelly hurt before or witnessed the cruelty suffered by another victim, at the hand of the trafficker or become despondent. Be very tolerant of what the victim has suffered and show concern for their wellbeing, as you ask the following questions:

- *Do you have your Passport, travelling document and or work permit in your possession?*
- *What type of work do you do?*

- *How much are you paid?*
- *Are you satisfied with your job?*
- *Can you leave the compound without permission?*
- *Can you change your employer?*
- *Are family members with you?*
- *Do you feel threatened?*
- *Have members of your family been threatened?*
- *Are there locks on the windows and doors to prevent you from leaving?*

### **WHAT AGENCIES PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS?**

*The respective Agencies may be contacted:*

- **The Police, Defence- Tel. 911, 919, (242) 322-4444, Prison, Immigration and Custom Forces**, (who generally are on the front line in identifying, interviewing, referring and helping TIP victims providing short-term/long-term safety )
- **Attorney General's Office**, prosecutors and judges, who ensure that TIP victims have access to legal advice, justice, and that the perpetrators of violence do not enjoy impunity;
- **Ministry of Health Providers**, inclusive of Medical, Dental, Psychological and trauma recovery care/services,
- **Ministry of Social Services** provides short-term/long-term housing, food/clothing, **Hot Line - Tel. (242) 322-2673**
- **Non-Governmental Organizations - Red Cross** - Tel. (242) 323-7370, **The Crisis Centre** - Tel. (242) 328-0922
- **Faith Based Organizations** – Participating churches provide housing, and counselling

Any participating Agency may be contacted at any time. The Bahamas TIP Programme provides a round the clock 24 hours victim hotline protection service. Calls are welcomed from victims or others acting on their behalf. The information received will be confidentially guarded and all cases will be thoroughly investigated. Victims will be respected and treated with dignity and can be assured of protection from the TIP trafficker or perpetrator, while their needs of housing,

food, personal and housing amenities, medical treatment and psychological counselling, legal advice, are additionally met.

### **HOW CAN THE PUBLIC BECOME INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS?**

- **Do not allow ignorance of this crime, to cause it to thrive in The Bahamas.**
- **Get educated about human trafficking.**
- **Read The Bahamas' TIP Act on line. Avail yourself to the abundance of information on trafficking in local and international printed and video media. This crime thrives when we remain ignorant of the cruel and evil plans/devices of the trafficker.**
- **Report to authorities, all suspected trafficking victim. If the victim is a child, 18 and under, professionals involved in jobs such as law enforcement, education, health, social services and mental health care and education are mandated to report such cases.**
- **Get involved. Volunteer your assistance through Non-Governmental and Faith Based Organizations, like The Bahamas Red Cross, The Crisis Center, and Links House**

### **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU SUSPECT YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF A TRAFFICKING VICTIM?**

#### **Screening Questions**

- 1. Are you free to leave the work site?**
- 2. Are you physically, sexually or psychologically abused?**
- 3. Do you have a passport or valid I.D. card and are you in possession of such documents?**
- 4. What kind of work do you do?**
- 5. What are you paid for the work you perform?**

6. Are there any special conditions attached to your employment?
7. Do you live at home or near the place you work?
8. (If the suspected victim is a foreign national) - 'How did you arrive to this destination?'
9. Have you or any of your family members been threatened?
10. Do you fear that something bad will happen to you, or to a family member, if you leave the job?

**Anyone can report suspected trafficking cases to the proper authorities. All professionals in Law Enforcement, Healthcare, Social Services, Labour, and Education must report and act upon all incidences of trafficking, once they are informed. The more persons become aware of crime of trafficking in persons, the more persons will be able to assist victims and prosecute the traffickers.**

### **ARE YOU BEING TRAFFICKED? HERE ARE SOME OF TELL TALE SIGNS.....**

- ✓ Do you fear retaliation from your employer if you speak up?
- ✓ Do you feel intimidated or frightened of your employer?
- ✓ Do you face threats of violence from traffickers?
- ✓ Do you feel helpless or ashamed and find it difficult to confide and or trust another?
- ✓ Do you fear being arrested or deported?
- ✓ Do you have your passport, travel document or work permit in your possession?
- ✓ Do you know how long you have been in this country?
- ✓ Do you have a language barrier?
- ✓ Do you have a problem with transportation and are unfamiliar with your environment?
- ✓ Do you need permission to leave the premises?
- ✓ Do you suffer from physical, verbal and or psychological abuse?
- ✓ Do you have a personal bank account or does another control your money?
- ✓ Do you know the names and contact of any Agency that can help you?

**IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED 'YES' TO THE MAJORITY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS,  
THEN YOU SHOULD CALL THIS NUMBER FOR ASSISTANCE: (242) 322-4444**

### **HOW DID YOU BECOME A TIP VICTIM?**

**Did you:**

- ✓ **Respond to an attractive 'employment opportunity' ad**
- ✓ **Trust the promises of a boyfriend or close friend**
- ✓ **Accept a proposal of marriage**
- ✓ **Agree to a deal arranged by poverty-stricken or abducted parents**

**As a victim have you been**

- ✓ **Blackmailed**
- ✓ **Threatened (with violence to children and or family)**
- ✓ **Beaten, raped and humiliated**
- ✓ **Locked in**
- ✓ **Starved into submission**
- ✓ **Sold and resold to various persons**
- ✓ **Given drugs**