

Statement of Ambassador Cindy Dyer
Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Global Health,
Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
“Implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act”
May 12, 2023

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Wild, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the U.S. Department of State’s efforts to combat human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a crime that exists in every country and affects people of every age, ethnicity, and gender, with historically and systematically marginalized groups often at greatest risk. The last few years have been particularly challenging and seen new trends in trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, Russia’s war on Ukraine, and disruption caused by climate change have exacerbated entrenched challenges such as poverty and economic inequality, heightened job insecurity in many sectors, diminished access to justice and services, disrupted global supply chains, and contributed to new waves of risky migration. All of these factors, and others, have heightened the risk of trafficking around the world. In recent years, we have seen increased online recruiting and exploitation of trafficking victims—especially online sexual exploitation of children, more forced criminality and forced begging cases, and rapidly growing forced labor in scam centers based in Southeast Asia that exploit victims worldwide.

The scale of trafficking is vast; the challenge we face, immense. But we are not helpless, and are using all the tools at our disposal to face these challenges head on.

Today, more than ever, the United States’ sustained leadership and commitment to combating trafficking in all its forms is critical. As Secretary Blinken stated during last year’s Trafficking in Persons Report launch ceremony: “It will continue to take relentless diplomacy, coordination, advocacy, and commitment [...] if we’re going to stop it.” And, as he noted, “the United States is committed to fighting it because trafficking destabilizes societies, it undermines economies, it harms workers, it enriches those who exploit them, it undercuts legitimate business, and most fundamentally, because it is so profoundly wrong.”

The State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (the TIP Office), which I have the honor to lead, is advancing the United States' global efforts to combat human trafficking through a "3P" framework – the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of victims, and the prevention of human trafficking. We address the 3 Ps collectively by objectively analyzing government efforts; engaging in strategic bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; targeting foreign assistance to build capacity of foreign governments and civil society; and advancing federal anti-trafficking policies through interagency coordination. We also partner with international and civil society organizations, human trafficking survivors, and the private sector to advance the fight against human trafficking. It is this "fourth P" for partnership that strengthens the effectiveness of the other "3Ps" in the fight against human trafficking.

We recognize that all countries can and should do more to prosecute traffickers, provide justice and protection for victims, and actively work to prevent human trafficking. We are focused on implementing key actions to advance an effective anti-trafficking response, including addressing human trafficking in the context of the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine; documenting and decrying human trafficking in the People's Republic of China, especially Xinjiang, and the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative; highlighting Cuba's coercive labor export program and supporting diplomatic engagement with countries hosting these workers to mitigate their exploitation; engaging with survivors and underserved communities; and preventing human trafficking in global supply chains and in the U.S. government's procurement of goods and services.

We too recognize that combating human trafficking cannot be done alone. We must continue to work collectively across the U.S. government, with bilateral and multilateral partners, and with local governments and civil society to further advance anti-trafficking efforts. Thanks to sustained support from Congress, in particular through the groundbreaking Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations, the Department has a well-established set of tools to draw upon in the fight against human trafficking.

For more than twenty years, the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) continues to be the world's most comprehensive resource on governmental anti-trafficking efforts and is our principal diplomatic tool to guide relations with

foreign governments. Our most recent TIP Report included narratives for 188 countries and territories, and its introduction focused on the importance of engagement with survivors of human trafficking. The TIP Report is one of our most powerful tools to encourage governments around the world to improve their anti-trafficking efforts. Ensuring it remains accurate, objective, and effective is among my highest priorities for the TIP Office.

Similarly, the targeted U.S. foreign assistance resources we bring to bear to strengthen the capacity of governments and civil society is an important element of our 3P approach. Since 2001, the TIP Office has leveraged more than \$700 million in foreign assistance funding to support nearly 1,000 anti-trafficking projects across more than 90 countries to address both sex trafficking and labor trafficking worldwide. Through bilateral projects and innovative programming such as Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnerships and the Program to End Modern Slavery, our investments have produced tangible results. Our assistance has helped thousands of human trafficking survivors receive vital assistance, including repatriation, psycho-social support, and counseling to rebuild their lives. We have also helped dozens of governments build crucial legal, policy, and regulatory infrastructure to care for victims and bring traffickers to justice. In places where individuals are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, such as in Southeast and South Asia and many parts of Africa, our assistance is helping identify victims of trafficking and ensuring they receive the protection and services they need.

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Wild, thank you again for holding today's hearing and this Subcommittee's steadfast commitment to combating human trafficking. As this Subcommittee considers legislation for the 118th Congress, I look forward to working closely with you and your staff on legislative efforts to reauthorize the international provisions of the TVPA, which remains the cornerstone of the United States' global efforts to combat trafficking. Ensuring Congress continues to provide the appropriate tools and authorities we need to effectively tackle international trafficking challenges, today and tomorrow, is essential.