

Message from the National Rapporteur

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National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons



As Jamaica's National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, I am committed to providing an independent and objective reporting mechanism on the issue of Trafficking in Persons, through the production of this annual report to Parliament on the nature and scope of Human Trafficking in Jamaica. This passion is also held dear by the team of persons whom I am privileged to lead in this endeavour and it is our hope that you will find this report both informative and useful.

As I reflect on how much has transpired since the tabling of the first report in Parliament in 2018, I can't help but recall the comment that I made concerning the fact that one of the biggest enablers that allows Human Trafficking to thrive and to seemingly grow from strength to strength, is the doubt that is still harboured by many persons in Jamaica that Human Trafficking is not real. Even if there is some concession that such a phenomenon does exist, many are slow to believe that it is a major issue for Jamaica. This myth perpetuates a continuing misunderstanding that will contribute to our failing to comprehensively and decisively address the problem.

Included in this edition of ONRTIP's report, is a Special Feature suitably entitled *From the Shadows... Transitioning from Victim to Survivor.*

Human Trafficking is happening, sometimes in plain sight, but because of how deep these inaccurate uncertainties run, the elements are sometimes not recognized for what they are – both by members of the general public and even among stakeholders who are well-placed to positively contribute to the fight against TIP. As a consequence of this lingering issue, this report has sought to tackle the matter head on. Included in this edition of ONRTIP's report, is a Special Feature suitably entitled *From the Shadows... Transitioning from Victim to Survivor.* In this exposé, a very brave Jamaican woman who was a primary victim of Human Trafficking in the form of Sexual Exploitation sat down with us and gave of her time and her embraced commitment to share her story so that

if at all possible, her experiences can help someone avoid this pitfall and debilitating life experience. We remain deeply appreciative to her. It is my hope that by sharing her experience through the pages of this report, it will confirm to every reader that Human Trafficking is not only real, but it is here within our shores.

Another strategy which this Report has adopted makes heavy reference to some critical areas of the first report. These include the extensive overview of the state of affairs concerning local anti-trafficking efforts; the efforts to develop a credible profile of trafficking survivors; geographical hotspots within the country; and typologies of this heinous crime.

Of tremendous significance as well, were the several recommendations made by me to advance Jamaica's anti-human trafficking efforts and initiatives through targeted action and coordination among diverse stakeholders within the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government. In this second iteration of the annual report to Parliament, the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons (ONRTIP) sought to assess whether any of the recommendations made by the National Rapporteur were implemented by key stakeholders tasked with improving Jamaica's counter-trafficking profile.

The report also provides current data and information on the actions of the GOJ to combat the scourge of Human Trafficking for the period under review (i.e. April 2018 to March 2020). In this regard, it remains a great source of pride and gratitude for ONRTIP, that we were able to have very meaningful collaborations with valuable external partners which enabled ONRTIP to substantially contribute to some of these gains that the country experienced – in this vein, I pause to recognize and thank the

British High Commission (Kingston) and the WARNATH Group (USA), among others. These contributions are elaborated on in detail throughout this Report.

Human Trafficking remains one of the greatest ills of modern society. The foot print of Human Trafficking can be, and in some instances is, stealthily embedded into many aspects of our daily lives, including in the goods and services that we may purchase or in the knowing look of contempt or pity that we reserve for a woman who seemingly offers sex for survival.

It is incumbent on all well-thinking Jamaicans to play their part in ending the suffering, horror and torture that is regularly meted out to trafficking victims by their traffickers. The exploitation of people who are less capable of defending themselves against the guile of a trafficker who has set sight on them with an intention to ensnare them, reasonably ought not to be measured against the same yardstick as someone who is more formidable and able to discern trouble and resist it. Despite the significant progress that has been achieved, there is still much work which needs to be done and we should be very mindful of that.

ONRTIP will continue to play its role in shining the spotlight on Human Trafficking through research, independent and effective monitoring and reporting. We recommit to promoting protection services and protocols which are trauma-informed and victim-centred; an improved and fortified mechanism to investigate, prosecute and punish traffickers; and advocating for public education messaging that is targeted, relevant and easily grasped by vulnerable groups who need it most, as well as members of the general public.



National Rapporteur