Press Release

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**February 8th, 2024**

**International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking**

**From February 2 to 8, a week of mobilization and prayer.**

**In Rome, a gathering of 50 young people from all continents engaged against trafficking.**

"***Journeying in Dignity. Listen. Dream. Act***": this is the theme of the tenth **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking** on **February 8**, a day established in 2015 by Pope Francis on the feast day of Saint Bakhita, the Sudanese sister who was a victim of trafficking and a universal symbol of the Church's commitment against this scourge.

Human trafficking is the process by which people are coerced or lured by false prospects, recruited, relocated, and forced to work and live in exploitative or abusive conditions. It is a phenomenon, as warned by recent United Nations reports, in continuous and dramatic evolution.

**A WEEK OF MOBILIZATION AND PRAYER WITH YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE CENTER.**

Thousands of people worldwide - in many parishes, communities, and associations - will gather to reflect, pray, and share their experiences of engagement against this global phenomenon.

**In Rome**, **50 young representatives from partner organizations of the Day are expected**. They are students, volunteers, researchers, creatives, communicators, activists, and operators against trafficking and **from February 2 to 8 will participate** in training and awareness sessions on trafficking.

The initiatives kick off on February 2 with the arrival of all delegates in Rome. The next day, February 3, marks the first day of training activities; on the morning of Sunday, **February 4**, they will participate in the **Angelus Prayer in St. Peter's Square**.

On Tuesday, **February 6**, at 4:15 pm, there will be a **flash mob against trafficking** in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Following that, at **5:30 pm**, there will be **an ecumenical vigil of prayer** in the **Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere** in 5 languages (Italian, English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese) based on the five elements: water, fire, air, metal, and earth.

On Wednesday, **February 7**, the international group will participate in the **Audience with Pope Francis** in the Paul VI Hall in the Vatican.

**ONLINE PILGRIMAGE ACROSS ALL CONTINENTS**

On Thursday, **February 8**, the **Online Pilgrimage of prayer and awareness against human trafficking** will take place, crossing **all continents and time zones**. It begins at 9:30 am from Oceania, followed by Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, South America, and finally concludes at 4:30 pm with North America.

**Over 50 countries are involved**, and **the central block**, for the second consecutive year, is entrusted to young people engaged against trafficking.

As in recent years, a **message from Pope Francis is also expected**.

The event is broadcast live in 5 languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian) on

[www.prayagainsttrafficking.net](http://www.prayagainsttrafficking.net)

"*Trafficking is around us, in our cities, but is often invisible to our eyes. With this Day, we want to increase awareness of trafficking, reflect on the situation of violence and injustice suffered by the victims of this global phenomenon, and propose concrete solutions. We invite everyone to listen and observe attentively, to dream together with the young people of a better world and to act for change, starting from personal, community, and institutional commitment to effectively counter the causes of trafficking and exploitation,*" said **Sister Abby Avelino**, MM, coordinator of the Day.

**THE NETWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY**

The initiative is coordinated by **Talitha Kum**, the international anti-trafficking network with over 6000 sisters, friends, and partners. It is promoted by the **International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and the Union of Superiors General (USG)**, in collaboration with the **Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development**, the **Dicastery for Communication**, the **Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life,** the **Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, Caritas Internationalis**, **CoatNet**, the **Focolare Movement**, the **Jesuit Refugee Service**, the **International Union of Catholic Women's Associations** (WUCWO), **JPIC- Anti-Trafficking Working Group** (UISG/UISG), The **Clewer Initiative**, the **Community Association Pope John XXIII**, the **International Federation of Catholic Action**, the **Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts Association** (AGESCI), the **Santa Marta Group**, and many other organizations worldwide.

The Day is realized thanks to the support of the **GSF - Global Solidarity Fund**.

**THE DAY ON X (ex Twitter)**

The organizers invite you to dedicate a tweet **on February 8** using the **official hashtag #PrayAgainstTrafficking**

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