

U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT LAUNCH OF THE U.S. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2018.

OPENING REMARK BY BUKOLA ORIOLA, SECRETARY, U.S. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Member of the President Interagency Taskforce to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Person (PTIF),

Members of the Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG),

Federal Agencies and State Representatives,

Fellow Survivors' Leaders,

NGOs and Advocates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the second annual report launch of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. The U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking is comprised of eleven survivor leaders who bring their knowledge and experience to advise and provide recommendations on federal anti-trafficking policies to the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (PITF).

The Council was established on May 22, 2015 by section 115 of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA), also known as the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act.

Today marks the two year term of the first ever U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking comprised of 11 members - Honorable Shandra Woworuntu, Honorable Ronny Marty, Honorable Ima Matul Maisaroh, Honorable Minh Dang, Honorable Harold D'Souza, Honorable Evelyn Chumbow, Honorable Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman, Honorable Flor Molina, Honorable Tina Frundt, Honorable Sheila White, and Honorable Bukola Love Oriola.

This report acknowledges federal agencies' efforts to implement recommendations provided in the first U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking Annual Report released in 2016. It also includes key takeaways from the Council's two regional trips to Minnesota and Washington State, and the work and structure the Council developed in the past year.

The U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking has worked tirelessly since the October 2016 release of our first report to further engage with federal agencies. The Council is particularly impressed that shortly after the release of its first report, several agencies met with us to begin implementation. Over this year, we have also seen increased federal engagement with survivors in implementing these recommendations, as well as compensating other survivors for their time, expertise, and expenses.

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In addition to focusing on documenting the implementation efforts of the Council's recommendations in its 2016 report, this year's report includes calls to action, as well as a special note on survivor engagement and empowerment.

It is encouraging to learn that the Trump Administration recognizes the enormous value that survivors of human trafficking bring to combating this heinous crime, as Advisor to the President, Ivanka Trump has been engaging with the Council to combat human trafficking in the U.S. In fact, Advisor to Ms. Trump, Bari Rogoff is here today. Thank you so much for joining us.

When we talk about being trauma informed, we mean creating a sense of safety, security, and well-being for survivors in all aspects of our work with them. It means developing programs and policies with survivors' physical, emotional, and psychological safety in mind. Part of this means engaging survivors as subject matter experts rather than simply asking them to recount their tragic experience. It is leaving them with the power to choose whether they want to share parts of their story or not without coercing them to do so, and also avoiding using a survivor to coerce another survivor to share their stories. In addition, it is being cognizant of the fact that a person who has experienced trauma could be triggered when trust is an issue in the process of work. For example, the Department of State TIP office staff have been trauma informed in gaining our trust and in every step of the way in their work with us.

In fact, it will interest you to know that we have a phrase that helps us deal with challenges during our work with the government- we just say, "It is the government." Such phrase helps us to quickly understand that a policy in place is our challenge, which helps us keep focus on the work and think of alternative ways that could help us better serve the federal government as advisers.

We will like to thank the TIP office and fabulous ICF staff for working long hours to support our vision and our work.

We will also like to acknowledge all the federal partners for taking the time to answer our questions and providing relevant feedback to enhance our work. There are representatives from the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, Justice, Interior, Homeland Security and Treasury in attendance today. Welcome and thank you for being here.

We will like to thank Baker Mackenzie for sponsoring our second annual report launch event and for all of your support in making this a successful event. Thank you also to Polaris for sponsoring several survivors to attend this event for the first time. To the survivors who are here today, we see you, we hear you, and we represent you in all of our work. Thank you so much.

In the past two years, we have learned how the federal government works, invested countless hours to ensure that survivors voices count when reviewing federal policies concerning human trafficking, and we have worked for the common good and the good of all.

It is our hope that federal agencies, state governments, NGOs, faith-based organizations, community members, corporate bodies, and philanthropists will continue to collaborate with

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survivors regardless of their gender, age, race, or sexual orientation to combat and prevent human trafficking without re-traumatizing survivors with their tragic pasts.

I encourage you all today to continue to work in your various communities in ways that ensure that survivors' voices count in a trauma informed manner.

We are live streaming today's event. We encourage you to tweet and share this event on social media. Remember to use the hashtags #SurvivorsVoicesCount and #EndTrafficking

Thank you all for your time and God bless you.

Bukola Love Oriola.