



30 July 2024

**Statement by CCA General Secretary on  
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons-2024:  
"Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking"**

Human trafficking is a global crime that trades in people and exploits them for profit. People of all genders, ages and backgrounds can become victims of this modern slavery, which occurs in every region of the world. The theme for World Day against Trafficking in Persons-2024, which falls on 30 July, is "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking". This theme aims to raise awareness of children's heightened vulnerability to trafficking and stimulate urgent action to stop child trafficking.

A report by the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) and other partners showed that there are approximately 49.6 million people engaged in modern slavery worldwide, and 12 million of them are children. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, the share of children among detected trafficking victims has tripled, while the share of boys has increased five times over the past 15 years. Globally, one in every three victims detected is a child. Girls are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation, while boys are used for forced labour.

Asia has become a main origin, transit and destination point for global human trafficking, especially of children. The clandestine nature of child trafficking and the complexity of the networks make it more difficult to identify victims and bring perpetrators to light. Trafficked children find themselves in some of the worst forms of child labour including slavery or similar conditions, child prostitution or being subjects of child pornography, drug carriers or mules for other illicit activities, labourers in conditions that jeopardize their health and safety, and so on. South and Southeast Asia continue to have innumerable children trafficked into prostitution. The main reasons for this alarming trend include poverty, low levels of education, dysfunctional families, lack of income opportunities for adults in the family, and weak law enforcement and community support, making children more vulnerable.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) joins the global campaign and calls for stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting the trafficking and exploitation of children, with perpetrators being held accountable and given maximum punishment. The CCA urges churches in Asia to sensitise and mobilise their communities and maximise their resources to save children from the inhumane conditions of human trafficking.

As we are reminded of the words of St. Paul: "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Ephesians 5:11), it is imperative that we join efforts to challenge the structures and policies that enable human trafficking to go undetected. The abuse, exploitation, and trafficking of children are a blatant disregard for human dignity and must be categorically denounced.

The CCA also urges Asian churches to provide adequate support for victims of this heinous crime and create safe spaces where children can grow up without fearing exploitation and abuse. Churches need to prioritise equipping people to sensitively address the physical and mental trauma caused by trafficking, and help victims recover and reclaim a sense of safety and normalcy.

We must ensure no child is left behind and continue to accompany and stand in solidarity with those caught in the odious web of human trafficking.

Yours along the journey,

Dr Mathews George Chunakara  
General Secretary, CCA