

Archbishop Auza:

Trafficking in persons is at the heart of the Holy See's preoccupations. People of goodwill, whatever their religious beliefs, can never allow women, children and men to be treated merely as objects, or to be deceived, violated, often sold and resold for profit, leaving them devastated in mind and body only to be finally eliminated or abandoned.

Such treatment is shameful and barbaric. It must be condemned unequivocally. The full force of the law must be brought to bear upon those who commit such crimes.

The Holy See notes that the report (S/2016/949) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons includes a wealth of statistics and highlights the many issues that are involved in this villainous practice. The report clearly shows the complexity of trafficking in persons as an international phenomenon and illustrates the multifaceted nature of the problem, whose resolution will require the collaboration of all, including in particular faith-based and faith-inspired organizations and other civil-society groups, which are very much present on the ground.

Pope Francis, who has made the fight against trafficking in persons and other forms of modern slavery a high priority, declared that modern slavery in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or trafficking in organs is a crime against humanity. Among the many causes and factors that abet contemporary forms of slavery like trafficking in persons are poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a lack of access to education or scarce, or even non-existent, employment opportunities, as widespread corruption and unrestrained greed rob the human person of a dignified life.

At present, however, the biggest single factor that facilitates trafficking in persons is war and armed conflict. Trafficking in persons is flourishing alongside today's refugee and migrant crisis, which has been primarily provoked by wars and conflicts. It is therefore pertinent that the Security Council examine the plague of trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

If the fight against trafficking in persons is to be effective, the international community must unite in the common commitment to put an end to the fighting, hatred and violence, and to pursue peace and reconciliation. The Holy See remains firmly convinced that the way to resolve open questions such as that of trafficking in persons must be that of diplomacy and dialogue, in order to resolve conflicts and end wars.

The Holy See encourages the Security Council to continue fighting against the scourge of trafficking in persons, primarily through preventing and ending armed conflicts. The challenge that trafficking in persons poses is immense, and all must assume their

respective responsibilities and collaborate with one another. The Holy See is committed to playing its part in meeting this challenge.