Press Release

Human Trafficking

February 8, 2025

XI International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking

From February 2 to 8, a week of mobilization and prayer in Rome and worldwide alongside Pope Francis

"Ambassadors of Hope: Together Against Human Trafficking" is the theme chosen for the 11th edition of the **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking**, which is celebrated every year on February 8, the feast of **St. Josephine Bakhita**—a Sudanese woman and religious sister who was a victim of trafficking and has become a universal symbol of the Church's commitment against this scourge.

The Jubilee emphasises **hope** through concrete actions such as addressing global issues like the horrific global reality of human trafficking.
Testimonies of this commitment are the **young people from the global anti-trafficking network** coming to Rome from across all continents for this international Day. The group will join representatives of the organizations promoting this initiative for a week of training and meetings, with a central moment of prayer and reflection with **Pope Francis**.

Pope Francis initiated this Day in 2015, entrusting its promotion to the **International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and the Union of Superiors General (USG)** with **Talitha Kum**, the international anti-trafficking network with over 6,000 sisters, friends, and partners worldwide, coordinating the initiatives and the partner network**.**

The **Day** is organized in collaboration with: **Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Dicastery for Communication, Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, Caritas Internationalis, CoatNet, Focolare Movement, Jesuit Refugee Service, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO), JPIC - Anti-Trafficking Working Group (UISG/USG), The Clewer Initiative, Association of the Community of Pope John XXIII, International Federation of Catholic Action, Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts Association (Agesci), Santa Marta Group, USMI (Union of Major Superiors of Italy)** and many other organizations worldwide.

<u>HUMAN TRAFFICKING: KEY FACTS</u>

According to **United Nations data**, an estimated **50 million people** were victims of modern slavery worldwide. The most affected groups are **women, children, migrants, and refugees**; **one in three victims is a child**, while **79% of those trafficked for sexual exploitation are women and girls**. Forced migration affects about **120 million people** globally. Wars, conflicts, violence, poverty, and environmental disasters force them to leave their homes, making them particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation as they take dangerous migration routes, often relying on traffickers or the black market for transit. Another trending form of trafficking is the online exploitation.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

JUBILEE 2025 PILGRIMS OF HOPE

A WEEK OF MOBILIZATION AND PRAYER

During the week of **February 8**, thousands of people worldwide—through parishes, communities, and associations—will gather for **prayer, meetings, and moments of sharing** against this crime.

In **Rome**, the events will begin on Sunday, February 2, with the participation in the **Angelus prayer with Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square**.

Monday, February 3: The delegation of young people will embark on a pilgrimage through **three Holy Doors of the Jubilee**, using the Walking in Dignity app**.**

Tuesday, February 4: A **flash mob against trafficking** will take place at **4:30 PM in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere**, followed by an **Ecumenical Prayer Vigil** in **English and Italian at 5:30 PM in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere**.

Wednesday, February 5: Continuing **training and awareness activities** on human trafficking.
Thursday, February 6: In the morning, a **youth pilgrimage through the Holy Doors**, followed by an event titled **"A Call for Hope and Healing"** from **4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross** in Rome. The event will feature **testimonies from survivors of human trafficking, young people, advocates,** and performances by artists such as the **Gen Verde band**.

MEETING WITH POPE FRANCIS AND GLOBAL ONLINE PILGRIMAGE

On the morning of **Friday, February 7**, **Pope Francis will meet with the delegation of youth ambassadors, survivors, and representatives of the organizing networks**.

Immdiately afterward, an **online prayer and awareness pilgrimage against human trafficking** will take place across all continents and time zones—from **Oceania, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and America**. The event will be **live-streamed in five languages** (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian) on: **www.prayagainsttrafficking.net**

Saturday February 8, the youth ambassadors will gather for a full day of dialogue and work, culminating in the launch of a **new global call to action against human trafficking**. This initiative will serve as a **new tool for awareness and mobilization**, to be used across networks worldwide.

*"In light of the **Church Jubilee**, this year's World Day of Prayer and Awareness, as pilgrims of hope, we invite everyone to take action against human trafficking. To combat this modern slavery, we must unite our efforts and work together with victims and survivors to address its root causes. Holding on to hope in the face of exploitation and injustice is challenging, but we must persist with determination to build a world of peace, justice, and dignity for all."*- **Sister Abby Avelino, MM, Coordinator of the Day.**

JOIN THE MOBILISATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Organizers invite everyone to **share a post on February 7 and 8 using the official hashtags**: **#PrayAgainstTrafficking #iubilaeum2025**

MEDIA CONTACTS

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www.prayagainsttrafficking.net | **www.preghieracontrotratta.org**