



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Trafficking in Persons Report [-Report Home Page](#)

Released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
June 5, 2006

III. Heroes Acting To End Modern-Day Slavery

Moussa Sow, Director of *Future of a Child*, Senegal

Moussa Sow's NGO, *Future of a Child*, works with trafficking victims to keep young girls from sexual exploitation, and helps young boys deal with the trauma they may have suffered at Koranic schools, where they may have been forced into begging. A former victim of child abuse, Mr. Sow uses his own difficult beginnings as inspiration to go out on nearly a daily basis to comb the roughest streets for children in distress, putting his life and well-being on the line. He also visits children in prison, reunites countless runaways with their families?even taking them to their homes in other countries?and follows up, into their adulthood, with those he has helped. He successfully campaigned for a larger center to shelter and educate more children. Mr. Sow's passion, respect, love, and patience allows him to establish an emotional connection with every child he meets, making a real difference in their lives.

Kristina Misiniene, Founder and Coordinator of *Aid to the Victims of Trafficking and Prostitution at Caritas*, Lithuania

Kristina Misiniene recognized the need for additional human trafficking education, prevention, and support for victims, and has worked tirelessly to spread the anti-trafficking message in Lithuania. In 2001, Ms. Misiniene gained support from *Caritas* and secured financing from abroad. Since, she has coordinated assistance to over 300 trafficking victims. She has been at the forefront of largely successful lobbying efforts to convince the government to take more forceful actions to combat trafficking, has collaborated with other NGOs, and rallied over 30 volunteers to widen the services provided to victims of trafficking. She continues to expand education and outreach programs in rural areas of Lithuania. Ms. Misiniene gives countless hours of her time to provide exceptional psychological help and material assistance to victims of trafficking and works with every victim personally.

Iana Matei, Founder and Coordinator of *Reaching Out*, Romania

Iana Matei's NGO *Reaching Out* has been operating since 1998 and has provided direct assistance to 127 victims of human trafficking. *Reaching Out* offers a one-year recovery and assistance program that provides victims with shelter, health care, legal aid, and the opportunity to complete their education and to learn new skills that enable them to enter the workforce. Upon completion of the program, *Reaching Out* acts as a mediator for victims while they seek employment, with the aim of reducing the victim's chances of re-entering the trafficking cycle. *Reaching Out* also carries out information-awareness campaigns targeting potential victims in several cities in the country. Ms. Matei has managed to maintain an active dialogue with local officials, earning their respect and cooperation. Today, police routinely refer victims to Ms. Matei's shelter. She has done a tremendous job of helping the victims of trafficking, and educating officials on the importance of helping these vulnerable people.

Nodira Karimova, Head of the Tashkent Office of IOM and Founder of *Istiqbolli Avlod*, Uzbekistan

Nodira Karimova's NGO *Istiqbolli Avlod* has assisted over 300 victims and is operating a shelter for returned trafficking victims. Before the shelter opened, Ms. Karimova and her associates took returned victims into their own homes or even rented apartments for them as they began the process of readjustment. In addition, she has worked to expand the number of trafficking hotlines to ten, receiving over 13,000 calls in the last year. Karimova developed a strong working relationship with the Uzbek consul in the United Arab Emirates that has facilitated the repatriation of many Uzbek women. Ms. Karimova also helped organize training for the Uzbek consular officials stationed overseas in January 2005, which spread awareness and made clear to the Consular officials that trafficking is a serious problem that demands serious action. She was instrumental in the decision to open additional shelters, one for sexually exploited victims, and another for labor trafficking victims, which will open in 2006.

Irene Fernandez, President of *Tenaganita*, Malaysia

Irene Fernandez has worked on behalf of both mistreated migrant workers and sex trafficking victims in Malaysia for the past several years. In 1996, Fernandez was arrested for publishing a report about detainee abuse and very poor sanitation conditions in the country's illegal migrant detention centers. Found guilty in October 2003 and sentenced to one year in jail, she appealed her case; her sentence remains suspended. In 2005, her NGO, *Tenaganita*, published a video entitled "Breaking Labor" that included the tragic stories of several foreign victims of labor trafficking and abuse in Malaysia. *Tenaganita* facilitated legal assistance and shelter for these trafficked victims and repatriated them to their home countries. Due to Ms. Fernandez's efforts, *Tenaganita* has become the largest and most effective anti-trafficking NGO in Malaysia. She has demonstrated considerable vision, courage, and leadership in the face of the Malaysian government lawsuit.

Maria Beatriz Paret de Palacio, First Lady of Ecuador

Ecuador's First Lady has combined her deep concern for the youth of her country with her communication and organizational skills to prevent Ecuadorians from falling victim to human trafficking. She has used her high visibility and position as President of the National Institute for Children and Families (INNFA) to lead a nationwide campaign against trafficking. Under her leadership, INNFA launched a powerful radio, print, and TV campaign that is expected to reach about 70 percent of the population within one year. Mrs. Palacio also led INNFA efforts to convince private industries to join the anti-trafficking efforts, specifically by encouraging cinema chains to show persuasive anti-trafficking spots before movies and two commercial banks to include anti-trafficking flyers in bank statements that went out to 40,000 account holders.

Kyai Husein Muhammad, Founder and Leader of *The Fahmina Institute*, Indonesia

Kyai Husein Muhammad has helped raise awareness of human trafficking among women and children in rural communities in West Java through an anti-trafficking media campaign, which included the distribution of 22,000 leaflets each week in mosques after Friday prayers, along with outreach to village health clinics and schools. He has researched and produced written works concerning the application of Islamic Law and human trafficking, an unprecedented initiative to use Islamic arguments and traditions to combat this crime. His scholarship highlights the Islamic perspective on victims' rights, the rights of women and children, and the immorality of human trafficking, while emphasizing that victims should not be criminalized and that communities have a responsibility to combat trafficking. Kyai Husein's efforts were instrumental in raising awareness of the risk of trafficking in posttsunami Aceh, and enlisting Muslim schools there in the ultimately successful prevention of trafficking in persons.

Kari Siddama, Grass Roots Activist and Founder of *Bharathi Trust*, India

Kari Siddamma has been working extensively with the marginalized Irula (a low caste) tribal communities in Tamil Nadu for more than 12 years. Her work includes freeing bonded laborers, organizing communities into cooperatives, and mainstreaming children into the educational system by providing motivational educational centers. With her intervention, an Irula movement has emerged that is now better organized to pursue indigenous legal rights from exploitive landlords. In one incident in 2004, Siddamma helped release over 1,000 bonded laborers employed in the rice mills of the Red Hills area of Tamil Nadu. With Siddamma's intervention, the plight of bonded laborers reached the Parliament and the laborers were ultimately released and rehabilitated. The *Bharathi Trust* designed a holistic program to address bonded labor including awareness camps, advocacy, day care services, and motivational centers for the eradication of child labor. In Tamil Nadu, this was the first time a tribal group had asserted itself in such a way.

Rahel Gershuni, De Facto Anti-Trafficking Coordinator for the Government of Israel

Rahel Gershuni has tirelessly led the Israeli effort to fight sex trafficking. She first learned about the issue by helping an individual victim navigate the government bureaucracy. While still handling the cases of many individual victims, she soon emerged as the unofficial antitrafficking coordinator for the entire government of Israel. She has led a reform movement within the Israeli government by serving as a catalyst for the development of policies that treat sex trafficking victims as true victims and not as criminals. Over the last three years, she has changed countless attitudes, shaped scores of policies, and, most importantly, saved many lives—all without an official appointment, without an assistant, and while holding a full-time job unrelated to her work as the de facto anti-trafficking coordinator.

Reverend Peter Nguyen Van Hung, Executive Director of *VMWBO*, Taiwan

Reverend Hung and the staff of *Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office* (VMWBO) have helped over 2,000 Vietnamese escape the horrors of labor and sex exploitation since 2004. Under his leadership, the VMWBO has rescued, sheltered, and rehabilitated victims of both labor and sex trafficking, including Vietnamese domestic workers and brides. He has pushed forward prosecutions against employers, labor brokers, and traffickers in Taiwanese courts, and negotiated compensation for lost wages and injuries. Recognizing the importance of coordinating efforts of antitrafficking organizations, Reverend Hung has built coalitions with various legal aid and labor rights NGOs in Taiwan. Rev. Hung has been a true anti-TIP hero for many abused and enslaved Vietnamese workers in Taiwan.

"[The] report probes even the darkest places, calling to account any country, friend or foe, that is not doing enough to combat human trafficking. Though many complain, the power of shame has stirred many to action and sparked unprecedented reforms. Defeating human trafficking is a great moral calling and we will never subjugate it to the narrow demands of the day."

--Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State
[May 10, 2006, Independent Women's Forum, Washington, DC](#)

[Report Home Page](#)