



For immediate release

15th June 2023

No upgrade for Ireland's ranking in the latest Trafficking in Persons report - more still needs to be done

Ireland remains on Tier 2 in the latest Trafficking in Persons report 2023 released today from the US Department of State. Ireland was upgraded from Tier 2 Watchlist to Tier 2 last year. Ireland is ranked Tier 2 as we do not fully meet minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring ourselves into compliance with those standards. Several gaps and areas to improve upon were highlighted last year and require further progression to meet minimum standards to increase our ranking to Tier 1.

Ruhama CEO, Barbara Condon, stated that major gaps in Ireland's identification procedures and the protection of victims remained unchanged in 2022: "Despite commitment from the government, ongoing delays in reforming the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) further impeded Ireland's progress in tackling Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation. Improvements are to be more inclusive and extend the formal identification of trafficking victims to civil society and additional statutory organisations. Victims will no longer be required to cooperate with law enforcement to access the NRM. This is internationally recognised best practice and protects victims from re-traumatization and can help more victims to come forward for identification and access appropriate supports. We are very concerned that the true extent and real number of trafficked victims is seriously undetected, which can restrict their access to vital support services.

"Whilst we are assured that the reformed NRM will be introduced soon, the demand for sex trafficking is evidently growing with more victims presenting to Ruhama in 2022. Ruhama engaged with a total of 147 victims of trafficking in 2022, 45 of whom were new referrals, which is a 60% increase on new referrals in 2021. Demand for the sex trade among sex buyers is driving the profiteering from human trafficking. Globally, it is a multi-million-dollar business and it is estimated that €180 million per year is made in Ireland¹. The sex trade is inherently violent, dangerous and traumatizing to countless individuals every day in Ireland. Ireland has made commitments to achieve zero-tolerance to sexual violence including sexual exploitation. This can be achieved by the urgent implementation of the reformed NRM, the revised Criminal Justice (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Bill 2022, the implementation of the Third National Action Plan to prevent and combat Human Trafficking and the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

"No progression has been made either in gender-specific accommodation for victims of human trafficking. Victim/survivors are still inappropriately housed in Direct Provision centres which Ireland has been criticised for internationally. Direct Provision is completely inappropriate and unsuitable for anyone who have gone through severely traumatic experiences. They are put at high risk of re-traumatisation and re-trafficking. We need to ensure safe, secure, gender-specific accommodation is prioritised as a matter of urgency. Ruhama regularly witnesses the severe impact that unsafe and inappropriate accommodation has on victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation."

- ENDS -

For further information, please contact:

Danielle Mc Laughlin, Policy and Communications Officer: 086 259 1247 / policy@ruhama.ie

Read the full TIP 2022 report here: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

About Ruhama

[Ruhama](#) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a registered charity, which works on a nationwide basis with individuals impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking. Ruhama offers free and confidential support services.

CONTACT US. FOLLOW US.

Ruhama

4 Castle St
Dublin 2

Tel: +353 1 836 0292

Website: www.ruhama.ie

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Ruhamalreland

Twitter: [@Ruhamaagency](https://twitter.com/Ruhamaagency)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ruhama>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ruhamaagency/>

ⁱ High Level Working Group (HLWG) (2020). The Implementation of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, Part IV – An Interim Review <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/2020HLWGInterimReportSOA2017ByGeoffreyShannon.pdf>