



For immediate release

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## **TIP report shows Ireland needs to do more to combat Human Trafficking**

Ireland remains on Tier 2 for the second year in a row in the latest Trafficking in Persons report 2024 released today from the US Department of State. Ireland is ranked Tier 2 as we do not fully meet minimum standards but we are making significant progress. Ireland has made developments in several gap areas that were highlighted in previous reports but more needs to be done to combat human trafficking.

Ruhama CEO, Barbara Condon, stated that major gaps in Ireland's identification procedures and the protection of victims continued in 2023: "Ruhama welcomes the forthcoming reformed National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The reforms are urgently required to extend the formal identification of trafficking victims to a competent authority or trusted partner and to remove the requirement for victims to cooperate with An Garda Síochána to access supports. The reformed NRM will bring Ireland in line with international best practice, helping more victims to come forward for identification and to access appropriate supports. While An Garda Síochána opened 28 new investigations for sex trafficking in 2023, there were no new prosecutions. We are very concerned that the true number of trafficked victims is seriously under detected, which can pro-long victims' pain and trauma and restrict their access to vital support services."

"The implementation of the reformed NRM is urgently needed as demand for sex trafficking is increasing with more victims presenting to Ruhama year on year. Ireland continued in 2023 to address demand for commercial sex by arresting and prosecuting sex buyers who are fuelling the profiteering from human trafficking. Globally, human trafficking is estimated to be worth \$237 billion per year, a 37% increase over the past 10 years according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The sex trade is inherently violent, exploitative and demeaning to women. Ireland has made commitments to achieve zero-tolerance to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based violence including human trafficking and sexual exploitation. It is therefore imperative that our legislation and national strategies are properly resourced and implemented."

"Ruhama welcomed the opening of the first accommodation unit for female victims of human trafficking in 2023, however, many more victim-survivors are still inappropriately housed in Direct Provision centres, an issue raised in the TIP report on Ireland. Direct Provision is completely inappropriate and unsuitable for anyone, especially victims of human trafficking, who are at high risk of re-traumatisation and are also at risk of being re-trafficked. We need to ensure safe, secure, gender-specific accommodation is prioritised as a matter of urgency. Ruhama witnesses daily the severe impact that unsafe and inappropriate accommodation has on victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation."

- ENDS -

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Read the full TIP 2023 report here:** <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/ireland/>

**About Ruhama**

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

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