



(L-r) Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Dmitry Iordanidi, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Gudrun Kugler, Vice-Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Migration addressing media at a press conference in Sarajevo, 14 July 2021 (OSCE/Vedran Pribilovic)

PRESS RELEASE

OSCE representatives call for support for victims of trafficking following their visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina

SARAJEVO, 14 July 2021 — Support to victims and assistance to local authorities in combating human trafficking was the focus of an official field visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina by Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and Gudrun Kugler, Vice-Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Migration.

During the three-day visit, Special Representative Richey and Vice-Chair Kugler discussed how to better implement recommendations formulated during an earlier virtual visit in March 2021. These recommendations focused on ways to improve the identification of and assistance to victims of trafficking among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers transiting the country.

“People on the move are particularly vulnerable and at a high risk of exploitation. Effectively identifying and protecting victims of trafficking is a crucial first step toward combating the crime,” Richey said.

Their discussions also focused on key steps for screening and detecting signs of exploitation, promoting economic empowerment of women as a prevention tool and granting migrant children and unaccompanied minors access to education.

“We support local authorities and civil society in building a system that will ensure identification and protection of victims of trafficking within mixed-migration flows and that will help dismantle criminal networks profiting from the exploitation of vulnerable people — children, women and men — in different ways,” said Vice-Chair Kugler. “Parliamentarians across the OSCE region are called to find ways to best combat trafficking, including prevention mechanisms and discouraging demand.”

The OSCE delegation observed that challenges persist on identification and protection of victims of trafficking in temporary reception centers for migrants. The delegation assessed the situation first hand at centers in Borici and Lipa.

Dmitry Iordanidi, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that the Mission continuously monitors the situation at the local level, particularly in the Cantons that are more affected by the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers’ influx, such as Una Sana Canton and Sarajevo Canton, and is working to promote better co-ordination between different levels of authorities in addressing the issue.

The OSCE officials further called for strengthening national, regional and international co-operation to dismantle international trafficking networks and provide support to victims of human trafficking in a coherent, durable and humane way.

Echoing their call, Samir Rizvo, State Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, said: “All national and international stakeholders have to co-operate to jointly find solutions for the identification and protection of victims in migration flows as a transnational problem.”

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