



# **ROME CONFERENCE AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

## **25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PALERMO PROTOCOL**

### **A CALL TO ACTION**

**December 10, 2025  
Pontifical Gregorian University  
Rome**

# BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Adopted in 2000, the Palermo Protocol is a key legal instrument in the global effort to combat human trafficking. It supplements the U.N. Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, it aims to prevent, suppress, and punish human trafficking, especially of women and children. This Protocol encapsulates previous global commitments including the 1930 Forced Labour Convention, scores of International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and protocols, and others, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over 180 countries now have domestic legislation criminalizing human trafficking and modern slavery.

Twenty-five years later, human trafficking remains widespread and is even growing. In 2023, the Global Slavery Index estimated that 50 million people are currently trafficked globally, generating over \$236 billion in criminal benefit annually. The **2024 UNODC Global Report** states that trafficking for forced labor, criminality, and child exploitation is increasing.

From 2019 to 2022, the number of detected trafficking victims increased by 25%. Cases of forced labor increased by 47%, and the number of child victims rose by 31%, with a 38% increase among girls. More boys were identified in regions with a high number of unaccompanied children. High-income countries also reported more cases of child trafficking, primarily for sexual exploitation.

To reflect on the Protocol's 25th anniversary, the Sovereign Order of Malta, Praeveni Global, the Santa Marta Group, and the Pontifical Gregorian University's Institute of Anthropology will host a high-level conference in Rome on Wednesday, December 10, 2025 during the final month of the **Jubilee 2025**.

The conference will address practices, challenges, and strategies for improving global efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking.

## Objectives

This conference will identify:

- **Action to implement concrete prevention measures** (such as policy, standards, advocacy and training) **and support measures** (such as identifying, protecting, assisting, rehabilitating victims and survivors).
- **Action to establish substantial integrated global efforts against human trafficking and modern slavery.** It should complement other initiatives that aim to effectively strengthen the rule of law and become an integral part of both national and international responses to global threats (to security, public safety, and the stability of legitimate and ethical economic structures). Although human trafficking and modern slavery are often seen primarily as criminal justice issues, the rule of law encompasses a broader scope, including prevention, protection, and prosecution.

This Conference aims **to promote dialogue** on coordinated strategies and **shared tools** to combat human trafficking **at every stage**. It will also work to **promote increased support** for government and civil society organizations actively engaged in this effort.

Key priorities include:

- **Raising awareness and changing attitudes** through education, advocacy, and strategic communication, to reduce tolerance for exploitation and empower communities to act.
- **Strengthening prevention systems.**
- **Early identification and intervention** for individuals and groups at heightened risk, with targeted outreach and protective measures.
- **Guaranteeing protection, rights, and recovery** for victims and survivors during and after exploitation, including safe reporting channels, access to justice, long-term assistance, rehabilitation, reintegration and reparation.
- **Ending impunity** through effective prosecution and accountability, ensuring perpetrators and complicit actors face justice, while dismantling the economic and financial structures that enable trafficking and modern slavery.

These priorities are designed to reinforce one another and drive systemic change. Together, they aim not only to respond to exploitation but also **to create conditions for its prevention and eventual eradication at international, regional, and national levels.**

The Conference has three main goals:

1. **Energize and encourage responses** to dramatically increase prevention efforts and improve integrated support for victims, survivors, and the organizations that serve them, and to advance the elimination of human trafficking and modern slavery worldwide.
2. **Strengthen collaboration** through integrated responses across the entire trafficking continuum, from prevention and prosecution to post-exploitation recovery and reparation.
3. **Promote comprehensive national action plans** that foster a global network engaging key government and civil society actors to amplify prevention and response to human trafficking and modern slavery.

The Conference will make a meaningful contribution to the global movement to end human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery in **mobilizing additional resources** for Governments and civil society, such as faith-based organizations, academia, businesses, media, local communities, and NGOs including victims and survivors.

# SCHEDULE

## DECEMBER 10, 2025

**08:00 - 09:00**

**REGISTRATION**

Lobby area, Pontifical Gregorian University

**08:30 - 09:00**

**HOLY MASS (OPTIONAL)**

Chapel of the Pontifical Gregorian University

**09:15 - 09:45**

**GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Opening Prayer by H.E. Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor Emeritus, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

Introductory Remarks:

- H.E. Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo, Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Order of Malta
- H.E. Stefano Pizzicannella, Special Envoy of Italy on Human Trafficking Issues and Equal Opportunity Policies Office Coordinator, Italian Department for equal opportunities, Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers
- Fr. Mark Lewis, SJ, Rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University
- H.E. Prof. Michel Veuthey, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (Chair, on behalf of the organizers)

The Conference will be structured around **five key pillars**:

**I. Structure, II. Process, III. Law Enforcement – Rule of Law, IV. Persons, V. Content**

**Overall Event Moderator:** Mr. Ian Sweet, Chief Executive Officer, Arise Foundation

**09:45 - 10:45**

## **PANEL I - STRUCTURE**

This session will discuss the current structures aimed at preventing and responding to human trafficking and modern slavery. Given the increased prevalence of this crime and the many emerging threats, are these structures commensurate with these threats? Are they adequately resourced? Are the right actors sufficiently involved?

- 1.H.E. Dr. Josef D. Blotz, Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Order of Malta (Panel Chair)
- 2.H.E. Stefano Pizzicannella, Special Envoy of Italy on Human Trafficking Issues and Equal Opportunity Policies Office Coordinator, Italian Department for equal opportunities, Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers
- 3.Ms. Chiara Cardoletti, UNHCR Representative to Italy, the Holy See and San Marino
- 4.Prof. Medir Mema Ph.D., Founding Director, AI Ethics and Governance Institute for Existential Risk
- 5.Ms. Carlotta Santarossa, Project Coordinator and Senior Focal Point for Counter-trafficking, IOM
- 6.Prof. Tomoya Obokata, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

**10:45 - 11:15**

## **COFFEE BREAK**

**11:15 - 11:20**

## **BRIEF ADDRESS**

His Eminence Cardinal Fabio Baggio C.S., Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

**11:20 - 12:15**

## **PANEL II - PROCESS**

Once the structures have been discussed and explored, what are the processes necessary for prevention, protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators. With low levels of identification of victims and even lower rates of prosecution, who is winning, the criminals or those fighting human trafficking and modern slavery? What processes are needed to ensure that good prevails and the evil of human trafficking is in decline?

- 1.The Rt. Rev. Bishop Dr. Alastair Redfern, Chair of the Clewer Initiative and Global Sustainability Network, Church of England (Panel Chair)
- 2.Ms. Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its Causes and Consequences
- 3.Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children
- 4.Mr. Mark Beavan, Head of Crimes against Children Unit, INTERPOL
- 5.H.E. Don Benedetto Barberini, President of CISOM (Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine di Malta) & Dr. Luca Aragone, Vice-president of CISOM
- 6.Mr. Rosario Maria Gianluca Valastro, National President of the Italian Red Cross

**12:15 - 13:15**

**LUNCH BREAK**

**13:15 - 13:40**

**PANEL III - LAW ENFORCEMENT - RULE OF LAW**

This panel will examine how criminal justice systems contribute to preventing human trafficking, dismantling trafficking networks, and ensuring accountability. It will explore the legal mechanisms and enforcement strategies used in the United States with particular attention to U.S. Department of Justice efforts, including the work of the FBI, and their collaboration with States and local partners.

- 1.The Honorable Pamela Bondi, Attorney General, United States Department of Justice (Keynote Remarks)
- 2.The Honorable Todd Blanche, Deputy Attorney General, United States Department of Justice
- 3.Mr. Andrew Bailey, Co-Deputy Director, FBI
- 4.The Honorable Lynn Fitch, Mississippi Attorney General

**13:40 - 14:00**

**PANEL III BIS - LAW ENFORCEMENT - RULE OF LAW**

This panel will examine the role of criminal justice in preventing human trafficking, prosecuting perpetrators, and protecting victims. What legal mechanisms and enforcement strategies are effective, and where are the gaps? How can law enforcement, judiciary, and related institutions act to ensure that justice prevails and trafficking networks are dismantled?

- 1.H.E. Frances Fitzgerald, Former Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland (Panel Chair)
- 2.Sir Stephen Kavanagh QPM, Former UK Chief Constable and Operations Director, Interpol
- 3.Detective Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan, An Garda Síochána, Ireland's National Police Service

**14:00 - 15:00**

## **PANEL IV - PERSONS**

Human trafficking and modern slavery treat people (children, women, and men) as commodities for profit. Offenders exploit vulnerabilities to build businesses based on coercion and abuse, often with little interference. Protecting vulnerable people is crucial and require more than enforcement: it requires trust. What can be done to build greater trust?

1. Father Leonir Chiarello, Superior General of the Scalabrinian Missionaries (Panel Chair)
2. Ms. Tatiana Kotlyarenko, Expert on Violence against Women and Girls and Human Trafficking, Member of the IF20 Human Trafficking Working Group, Former Adviser on Anti-Trafficking Issues at OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
3. Ms. Geneviève Colas, Human Trafficking Department, Secours Catholique (Caritas-France), Member of the French Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH)
4. Sr. Patricia Ebegbulem, SSL, Founder of the Bakhita House, Lagos, Nigeria, Co-Laureate of the 2023 Sisters Anti-Trafficking Awards (SATA)
5. Dr. Maria Mercedes Rossi, MD., Main Representative of Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) at the United Nations
6. Dr. Rafał Szepietowski, Director for International Cooperation, Maltese Aid - Maltese Medical Service Poland
7. Ms. Sendrine Constant, Director of Research, Learning and Communication, ECPAT International

**15:00 - 15:20**

## **TEA BREAK**

**15:20 - 16:20**

## **PANEL V - CONTENT**

Currently, the list of responses to human trafficking and modern slavery mostly contains post-offending measures. The goal is to end these crimes. Identifying and supporting victims and survivors is crucial. However, how can we prevent these crimes if we wait for victims to come forward? What should the contents be for prevention, protection, and prosecution?

1. Mr. Kevin Hyland OBE, LL.M, Chief Executive Officer, Praeveni Global (Panel Chair)
2. Mr. Andrea Favalaro, Former President of Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS) and Independent Strategic Advisor
3. Mr. Jean-Benoît Manhes, Deputy Coordinator of the Office of the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
4. Sr. Abby Avelino, MM, International Coordinator, Talitha Kum, International Union Superiors General (UISG)
5. Mr. Karl Racine, Partner, Hogan Lovells Law Firm and Former AG of Washington DC
6. Dr. Cristina Duranti, Director, Good Shepherd International Foundation

**16:20 - 16:40**

## **WRAPPING**

- Fr. Prof. Dr. Hans Zollner, SJ, Founder and Director of the Institute of Anthropology (IADC) at the Pontifical Gregorian University (PGU)
- Kevin Hyland, OBE, LL.M, Chief Executive Officer, Praeveni Global
- H.E. Prof. Michel Veuthey, Ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

**18:00 - 21:00**

## **RECEPTION (SUBJECT TO ROOM CAPACITY - BY INVITATION)**

Casa dei Cavalieri di Rodi, Via di Campo Carleo 23, Piazza del Grillo, Rome.





# Q&A

**At the end of each panel, you are invited to submit your questions and remarks using the QR codes below.**

**Not all questions may be answered live, but they may receive a response afterward.**

**Panel I**



**Panel II**



**Panel III**



**Panel III Bis**



**Panel IV**



**Panel V**



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