



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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REASON FOR PUBLICATION: **Response to publication of annual Trafficking in Persons Report by US State Department**

Human trafficking in India continues to cause international concern

For the seventh consecutive year, an internationally recognised people trafficking report stated that India's Government does not have sufficient measures in place to reduce the current and potential levels of human trafficking within its country.

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is undertaken annually by the US, with the consent of the UN and its member states. The report monitors countries' compliance to agreed minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. The 2010 report was released by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, last Monday.

Stating that India remains a source and transit country for human trafficking, the report largely outlined the insufficient progress made by the Indian Government in its law enforcement, protection and prevention efforts to address trafficking. With 90% of trafficking staying internal to India and mostly impacting the poorest within society, the report outlined a number of recommendations required to meet those minimum standards.

While the report did not specifically speak about the Dalit people, instead referring to those most at risk of trafficking as those in the 'most disadvantaged social economic strata', the human rights organisation, Dalit Freedom Network UK (DFN UK) welcomed the report. DFN UK particularly valued how it highlighted the significant progress made by individual states. The state of Andhra Pradesh, where DFN UK and its partners are implementing a large proportion of their anti-trafficking programme, was mentioned several times for its successes in 2009.

While much still needs to be done regarding India's biggest trafficking issue, bonded labour, Andhra Pradesh together with the state of Maharashtra dramatically improved their law enforcement efforts against sex trafficking. During the reporting period the state of Maharashtra secured 8 convictions of sex traffickers and rescued 22 children and 8 adults. Andhra Pradesh secured 55 convictions of sex traffickers and "customers".

Also, despite the reported inconsistent and inadequate delivery of national Government resources to trafficking victims, Andhra Pradesh state's Department of Women and Child Development was noted for disbursing over \$10,000 in interim relief to 48 sex trafficking victims during 2009.

Additionally, one of 2010's nine TIP Report global heroes also came from Andhra Pradesh. Sattaru Umaphathi, an anti-human trafficking officer of the Crime Investigation Department was recognised for his personal contribution to combating human trafficking in India. Umaphathi has worked closely with DFN UK's Indian partners, Operation Mercy India Foundation, in bringing anti-trafficking cases to the police.

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Joseph D'souza, International President of Dalit Freedom Network said, "The TIP report is an important indicator of the progress countries are making to eliminate trafficking. While India maintains its Tier 2 Watch List rating, the report shows positive signs that the country is moving in the right direction. DFN UK sees the report and its recommendations as providing crucial guidance on how best to align their anti-trafficking programme with the Indian Government for a consistent, high impact and sustainable approach."

The full TIP report can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm>

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- Dalit Freedom Network UK (DFN UK) is a working name of Freedom Network International, a charity registered in January 2008 in England and Wales.
- DFN UK is a non religious, non-partisan human rights organisation.
- DFN UK has an office in London.
- DFN UK currently comprises: 6 trustees; 9 part time volunteers; 1 part time employee – Campaign Manager (to be appointed in 2010).
- The aim of DFN UK is to bring an end to the trafficking of Dalit men, women and children into various forms of modern day slavery by specifically focusing on educating and leveraging support from the UK while working with Indian and other international partners.
- DFN UK is unique as it is the only organisation in the UK focused on the issue of Dalit trafficking.
- DFN UK launched a UK focused three year programme in 2010. The foundation of the programme is educating the British population about the problem of Dalit trafficking in order to gather support for the anti-trafficking programme both in the UK and in India. The support will come in the form of fundraising, UK advocacy, generating volunteers to travel to India and physically support anti-trafficking programme activities, generating support from individuals in specific professions such as legal, healthcare, victim care, witness protection, to provide targeted advice and assistance to key areas of the anti-trafficking programme. This three year programme is the first programme undertaken by DFN UK. The organisation's previous function was to facilitate Indians championing the Dalit cause engaging with the UK public and politicians on an occasional basis.
- Joseph D'souza is International President of DFN and on the board of trustees for DFN UK. He has campaigned tirelessly for Dalit rights since 1999. He is the author of the book 'Dalit Freedom - the Struggle for Dalit Emancipation'. Dr D'souza has lobbied both within and outside India on behalf of the Dalit cause. He has been instrumental in giving the Dalits a voice internationally and winning support for their rights in political, faith and NGO communities
- DFN is an international network of organisations comprising offices in UK, USA, Germany, Canada and Australia. Offices are also being formed in Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa and South America
- DFN UK partners with Operation Mercy India Foundation (OMIF) based in Hyderabad, but working across India with 100 schools, 2 Clinics, and a range of education, healthcare, economic development and legal advocacy projects.
- **For further information please contact:**

Lucy Khoneizer
Communications and media relations
DFN UK
Tel: 07854 763814
E-mail: lucy.khoneizer@dfn.org.uk