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COUNTERING TRAFFIKING IN PERSONS

Mauritania lies at the crossroads of the African continent. Its long and porous borders have long been the preferred route for all types of illicit movements, from the trafficking of drugs and arms, to the smuggling of migrants. These traditional smuggling routes are used by human traffickers moving innocent victims to serve as domestic servants, forced labourers, sex slaves, or “temporary wives”¹, within Mauritania, North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

While the Government of Mauritania ratified the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and adopted anti-trafficking legislation in 2003², vulnerable populations remain at increased risk. Therefore, the two projects implemented by IOM and funded by the Government of Germany are assisting the Mauritanian government to increase awareness of vulnerable communities of the risks and recruitment tactics of traffickers, to reinforce the capacity of security and judiciary forces to effectively recognize, interdict and prosecute human trafficking and to offer meaningful assistance to victims of trafficking (VOT).

IOM has been working to counter trafficking in persons since 1994. Ever since, IOM has assisted approximately 70,000 trafficked persons worldwide. IOM’s primary aim is to prevent human trafficking and to protect victims while offering options for safe and sustainable return and reintegration in their home countries.

Defining Trafficking in Persons

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the receiving or giving of payment... to a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”³



As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants, to encourage social and economic development through migration and to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management. Areas of work include border management, conflict prevention, community stabilisation, migration and development and counter trafficking. These activities take the form of direct assistance, capacity building and information sharing as well as awareness-raising. IOM’s central objective is to improve and develop global, regional and country level responses to protect and assist migrants in need and to support governments to reinforce their migration management capacities.

¹US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015

²Loi N° 025/2003 against human trafficking

³(Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; Art 1 of the Mauritanian Law No 025/2003 on Trafficking in Persons)



Project Brief

After having implemented a five-months pilot project funded by the Government of Germany to assess the prevalence, sources and impact of human trafficking in the Islamic Republic Mauritania, IOM is currently implementing the second phase which, building on the knowledge gathered, will develop specific sensitization tools to increase awareness of human trafficking especially among vulnerable populations, reinforce the capacity of border officials and the judiciary to recognize and prosecute human trafficking and will offer direct assistance to the victims. Furthermore, a TIP/VoT Standard Operating Handbook will be produced to reinforce Mauritanian security forces capacities. These two projects will allow IOM to assist the Government of Mauritania to develop targeted responses to confront human trafficking and will reinforce the collaboration between the Mauritanian government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as with UN agencies operating in Mauritania such as UNICEF, OHCHR and UNHCR for the purposes of confronting human trafficking in Mauritania and the region.

Implementation Period

Phase 1 - 5 months (November 2015 – February 2016)
Phase 2 - 12 months (February 2016 -2017)

Budget: 400.000 Euros

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OBJECTIVE:

The projects will research and increase the general public's knowledge and awareness of human trafficking and labour exploitation within Mauritania, will improve the Government of Mauritania's ability to fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking and will assist victims of trafficking and other

Outcomes:

- Research the causes, relevant patterns, funding sources, contributors, and effects on victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation;
- Improve general public's understanding of the causes and dangers of human trafficking and labour exploitation;
- Increase the capability of regional and national security forces and judiciary to recognize, interdict and prosecute human trafficking;
- Provide VoTs with meaningful assistance, vocational training and AVRR.

Activities:

- Conduct research on TIP current trends through surveys, focus groups, and targeted interviews with CSOs, NGOs, Mauritanian security and border management officials, and Judiciary;
- Analyse the effectiveness of Mauritania's "Law Against Trafficking in Persons". Interview judges, prosecutors, MPs, and border security officials;
- Conduct media outreach to include briefings, interviews and discussions to increase journalist's level of knowledge of TIP/VoT related issues;
- Conduct trainings for law enforcement.

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