



Human Trafficking Update

March 2018

EDITORIAL

Do Not Despair

I just finished watching a Ted Talk by Sunitha Krishnan. Ms. Krishnan is an activist in India, fighting for better laws against human trafficking, and providing support for women and children who are survivors. (Look on the last page of this newsletter for more information on her efforts. [Watch her Ted Talk here.](#))

Ms. Krishnan tells stories of three children. Each of them was under the age of 5 when they were found. Some of them were sold by family members. One has no history that they can find. All of them had been horribly violated.

You need to brace yourself to hear these stories. It's hard to imagine that kind of cruelty to anyone – particularly to a child.

It's hard to imagine what you can do in the face of such heartlessness.

How much easier it would be to scroll past the stories, and instead click on the 30-page post of playful puppies, or the latest quiz that will tell you which Harry Potter character you are.

But that is not the pathway to change.

Before watching this Ted Talk, I watched news coverage of the March for Our Lives, where Americans of all ages, from all backgrounds, across communities nationwide, were taking a stand for better gun laws. The teenaged – yes, teenaged – leaders of the movement have been bullied. They have been targeted by some of the nation's most powerful

business lobbies. They have been called names and disrespected by state leaders and members of Congress.

They will not be swayed or distracted. They take the negative energy, and turn it into determination to create something better. Through their leadership, which they engage in intentionally and with open hearts and minds, have become a global example. There is the unmistakable feeling that things will be different.

There are lessons to be learned here. About not being distracted. Not allowing others to gaslight you. Not living in the past, or even in the moment, but striving on toward a better vision for the future. It's about taking this negative energy, and turning

immediately to how this can be transformed into something for good.

It's easy to feel powerless. But it is in us, both individually and collectively, that we have the power for changes great and small.

For all that trafficking survivors have been through – many of which have experienced horrors we cannot imagine – Ms. Krishnan talks about their courage, and their determination to thrive and create a better life for themselves and their children.

She says her biggest challenge is not to inspire the survivors to change. It is coping with civilized society, and their “PhD” in isolating and denying survivors. Our inability to welcome and accept “those people” into our businesses, our churches, and our homes.

The smallest changes add together to greatness. Ms. Krishnan challenges us. Don't tell me about the hundreds of ways you cannot help. Tell me about the one way you can. Certainly, acceptance is something we can handle.



Business and Government Coming Together

Recently, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Blue Campaign held a Facebook Live event to show how the public and private sectors are coming together to thwart human trafficking. The event included representatives from the American Trucking Association, Amtrak, Delta Airlines, and DHS.

Speakers talk about their commitment to training, as well as the engagement of employees in the fight.

[Click here to view the 30-minute event.](#)

The Vulnerability of Native Americans

Children who live in conditions of poverty and despair are more vulnerable to abuse. Native American children are among some of our nation's most vulnerable.

According to Native Hope, a nonprofit organization that works to inspire hope particularly within Native American reservations in South Dakota, Native American women and children comprise about 40 percent of sex trafficking victims in the state. They cite federal data, which says Native American women are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted as women of other races.

Lisa Brunner of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center says, “Human trafficking of Native women in the United States is not a new era of violence against Native women, but rather the continuation of a lengthy historical one.”

For more information about how you can help stop violence against Native American women and children, visit nativehope.org

Compete in the Human Trafficking Hackathon

From April 14-15, the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TRACCC) at George Mason University will hold a Hackathon, inviting individuals and teams to compete to offer the best technology solutions to combat human trafficking. Solutions may help law enforcement, assist advocates, or engage service providers to fight trafficking and/or help survivors.

Date: Saturday April 14th, 2018 9:00am through Sunday April 15th, 2018 5:00pm

Location: Founder's Hall, 3351 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22201 (Virginia Square Metro Stop)

RSVP: Please click [here](#) to purchase tickets or for more information, click [here](#).

TRACC offers a few ideas to get the creativity flowing:

- What indicators help predict behaviors of human trafficking suppliers?
- How can data collected at the local level help analysts at the federal level to correlate data to find traffickers and victims? How can automation or machine learning assist?
- Create a predictive model of trafficking to forecast staffing needed for victim services and law enforcement.
- Create an app that could help truckers to identify signs of human trafficking and alert law enforcement.
- What can we learn from natural disasters that could prevent the emergence of human trafficking?
- Create a platform for reporting human trafficking case data that provides a standard format and fields for law enforcement agencies, with the ability to share datasets with other agencies and jurisdictions. The platform should include the capability for future geospatial or GEOINT analysis.

Judges will include:

- Patrick J. Hannon, Director, Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Ada Warren, Human Geographer & Developer at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
- Bill Woolf, Director, EPIC Solutions, Retired Fairfax Police Department Human Trafficking Detective
- Ethan Bennett, Techie at Polaris
- Christina Bain, Director of the Initiative on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery





Save the Date: Human Trafficking Global Summit

From April 4 to April 7, 2018, in Washington, DC, a global summit of leading groups and individuals in human trafficking will gather to network, share experiences and new ideas. Speakers will focus on motivating an even greater commitment in our communities to fighting human trafficking globally. Events will include meeting with representatives.

[Click here to learn more and register.](#)

Join the Northern Virginia Justice Summit

From April 27-28, the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative (NOVA-HTI) will hold its Justice Summit. Its theme will be how to end trafficking: hearing from speakers and conducting outreach. The keynote speaker is abolition leader Cat French. To learn more and to register, go to novahti.com

NOVA-HTI is also offering training for speakers who want to educate their communities on the issue of human trafficking. [Click here to learn more.](#)

FAITH. JUSTICE. FREEDOM
NOVA-HTI

Faith-Based Outreach to Educate in Ohio

Many churches are engaged in the fight against trafficking, including the Catholic church. As just one example, Dominican Sister of Peace Judy Morris recently spent 7 years creating a committee that conducted outreach throughout Columbus Ohio.

Sister Morris' work included the installation of billboards, outreach to local businesses, meetings with lawmakers and law enforcement, and a campaign to support trafficking legislation in Congress. In one unique effort, her group distributed bars of soap in hotel rooms with the numbers of human trafficking hotlines on the wrappers.

[For more information about how Sister Morris and other church leaders are working for justice, click here.](#)

Human Trafficking Institute Calls for Victim-Focused Solutions

The Human Trafficking Institute (HTI) has filed an amicus brief in *Farah vs. Weyker*, a case currently in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit. In the case, six plaintiffs say that the defendant, a St. Paul, MN police officer, mishandled the investigation against them.

HTI's brief weighs in, in favor of the defendant. "The Court should endorse the victim-centered approach and recognize that the law enforcement officers who first come into contact with human trafficking victims play a critical role in providing victims the help they need to recover," the brief states. "Justice is not limited to successfully prosecuting traffickers."

The brief defines what a victim-centered approach means: "Although the term "victim-centered" is an undefined concept in law, this practice typically includes keeping victims informed about the criminal

proceedings; not prosecuting victims for unlawful conduct that resulted from being trafficked; giving victims access to survivor resources to address their short- and long-term 6 wellbeing; providing victims with immigration relief; ensuring mandatory restitution; giving victims the opportunity for civil suits; and allowing for the effects of trauma in case investigations.”

[Read the amicus brief here.](#)

Federal Law Fights Human Trafficking Online

The Senate and the House have passed a bill that would enable prosecutors to pursue Websites that host advertisements for prostitution. This will help make Websites like Backpage more accountable for human trafficking happening through its channels. The bill awaits the President’s signature.

Sens. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) were the only “no” votes in the Senate.

Specifically, the bill amends the Communications Decency Act to no longer provide immunity from sites that host prostitution ads. The bill was passed by Congress after a Senate subcommittee investigated Backpage and found that it was involved in editing prostitution ads on its site to remove references to underage girls, while allowing the ads to stay on the site. Separately, a [Washington Post investigation](#) showed that Backpage representatives actively solicited ads from prostitutes who advertised on other sites and created ads for them on Backpage.



While technology companies initially opposed the bill, many changed their position after effective lobbying from law enforcement and anti-trafficking groups.

[Read more in the Washington Post article here.](#)

Interested in a New Training Resource?

Check out this one-pager. This resource is provided by the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign, and is offered as a “coffee break” training for first responders. Not only does it offer government resources, it points to the National Human Trafficking hotline, where first responders can get non-government confidential support.

[Click here to see the one-pager.](#)

National Human Trafficking

Hotline

1-888-3737-888

Human Trafficking Update

*A regular newsletter
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*Human Trafficking Task
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*Submit story ideas to
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The Personal Cost of Fighting Violence

It's comparatively easy to fight for justice in the United States. The battle against human trafficking in other countries can often take a very violent turn. But for many advocates invested in the fight, such violence only hardens their resolve.



Take the example of Sunitha Krishnan, who advocates against trafficking and offers support for survivors in India. She leads an organization called Prajwala, which rescues women and children from sex traffickers.

The country has bestowed her with honors for her work. At the same time, she has been violently attacked by traffickers, and seen staff members attacked and killed for their commitment.

How does she continue on? Through the memory of survivors, and knowing the suffering they experience.

Prajwala has rescued 20,000 people to date. More than 85 percent of them are able to avoid being trafficked again. Its facilities provide food, shelter, education and training. One complex houses 1,200 residents – the largest in the world for trafficking survivors.

[Read more in the New York Times profile here.](#)

[Watch her Ted Talk here.](#)