



United Arab Emirates

COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE UAE

Annual Report
2008-09

Contents

FOREWORD	4
INTRODUCTION	6
I) LEGISLATION	8
II) ENFORCEMENT	10
III) VICTIM SUPPORT	16
IV). BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	23
CONCLUSION	28

FOREWORD

Human trafficking, a crime that exploits the vulnerable for commercial gain, remains at the top of the UAE's agenda and the government is intensifying its efforts to combat this global phenomenon with each passing year. Since the publication of the 2007 annual report on combating human trafficking, the UAE aggressively fought this crime on several fronts in 2008. The UAE's progress is evident in the rapid strides made as part of the country's comprehensive four-pillar action plan to tackle this crime, which includes legislation, enforcement, victim support, as well as bilateral agreements and international cooperation.

The indicator that best reflects the government's commitment and the results it has achieved during the last year is the increase in the number of human trafficking-related cases. Over 20 cases were registered during the last year, as opposed to 10 cases in 2007. Simultaneously, the number of prosecutions and the severity of punishments prescribed by the UAE courts also increased significantly.

The past year recorded other noteworthy developments. A specialised department was established by the Ministry of Interior to oversee and improve the condition of human rights in the country; several changes were introduced as part of a continuing drive to improve worker conditions in the UAE; and in line with honouring its international commitment, the government ratified the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

The laws protecting victims of this crime are in place, and in order to increase the government's effectiveness, the Council of Ministers expanded the size and scope of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking by including public prosecutors and law

enforcement officers as its members. Additionally, workshops and training sessions were conducted frequently throughout the year for the benefit of law enforcement officials. Training was conducted in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration and International Labour Organisation. A website to serve both as an official information source, as well as a forum for interaction between the public and government was also launched.

These and other endeavours were acknowledged by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council when the Working Group Report on the UAE's Universal Periodic Review was unanimously adopted in March 2009.

During the year ahead, the UAE will implement a number of other important mechanisms designed to prevent further cases of trafficking and protect victims. These include launching a media campaign to enhance public awareness about human trafficking at our airports and embassies abroad; and more specialised training programmes to hone the skills of the relevant personnel involved in the campaign to tackle this crime.

Furthermore, the UAE will continue to take a lead on this issue in the region and internationally, acknowledging the existence of human trafficking as a critical problem that afflicts our society and many others around the world. The fight against human trafficking is our fight, and a goal we share with all responsible nations. We have accomplished a lot in a short span of time, but we will continue to remain committed to consistently improving our efforts to tackle this crime in line with international best practices and our own values and belief system.

***Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash
Chairman, National Committee
to Combat Human Trafficking***

INTRODUCTION

With the anti-human trafficking law – Federal Law 51 – becoming effective in November 2006, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) began a systematic effort to combat this crime in the country. Furthermore, as a committed and responsible member of the international community, the UAE continues to remain proactively involved in the global fight to combat human trafficking.

This report – the second since the law came into force – documents the country’s stand on the issue, efforts to combat it and the obstacles and challenges encountered during the last year, as well as the plans for the year ahead. Furthermore, the report annually produced by the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking also serves as a measure of the country’s progress and a channel to promote dialogue, transparency and knowledge exchange at the international level.

The UAE believes that the more informed we are about the victims of this terrible crime, the source countries, transit routes and methodologies of traffickers, the more the government can do to prevent the crime. Towards this end, the annual report also helps integrate various processes that are part of this effort – collaboration with law enforcement agencies, international organisations and victim support centers; data collection and analysis.

It is important that the commercial impetus of human trafficking is addressed in any national legislation and policy. Trafficking is a thriving global business that generates billions of dollars a year encouraging the estimated trafficking of nearly a million people across international borders annually. It is also linked to other organised crimes like human smuggling, drug trafficking, and money laundering.

The majority of transnational victims are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation and the rest into forced exploitative labour.

The UAE receives large numbers of temporary contractual workers every year, who have been an important component of the country’s development. Unfortunately, a section of this workforce is susceptible to deceit by unscrupulous recruiters, with some becoming victims of human trafficking. For many trafficked persons, it is only when they arrive in the UAE that they realise that the work they were promised does not exist and they are forced instead to get employment in jobs or conditions to which they did not give consent to. Since the deceit begins from the time they leave their home countries, the importance of partnering with source and transit countries is now paramount to the UAE’s national strategy.

The active implementation of the UAE’s legal and social support mechanisms during the first year of its institutionalised fight against human trafficking has been recognised by the international community. Although the UAE welcomes constructive help and criticism from international partners and organisations, the anti-trafficking agenda is our own. The government realises that like in many other countries, the challenges are numerous. The UAE will not accept the exploitative and coercive abuse of any human life in the country and is making great strides to eradicate this crime.

This phenomenon is increasingly being addressed publicly both by the local and federal governments and their law enforcement agencies. In order to pursue an active and results-oriented strategy, the government continues to proactively use all tools available under its four-pillar action plan to combat human trafficking. This includes legislation; enforcement, victim support; as well as bilateral agreements and international cooperation.

D) LEGISLATION

The multi-disciplinary Federal Law 51 of November 2006, the first of its kind in the region, continues to provide the legal framework to handle human trafficking cases. Article One of this law defines trafficking as “recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving persons by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation, engaging others in prostitution, servitude, forced labour, enslavement, quasi-slavery practices, or the detachment of organs.”

This definition is closely aligned with the definition outlined in the Palermo Protocol and by other international legislation. It offers strong punitive measures, including maximum penalties of life imprisonment and covers all forms of human trafficking – not just overt enslavement but also sexual exploitation, child labour, and commerce in human organs.

Under the law, a life sentence is applicable if the crime is committed through deceit, if it involves the use of force or threat of murder or bodily harm, or if it involves physical or psychological torture. Furthermore, the 16-article law prescribes stiff penalties against traffickers ranging from one year to life imprisonment and fines of 100,000 dirhams and one million dirhams (\$27,500 and \$275,000).

In addition, Article 364 of the UAE Penal Code protects against forced prostitution and Article 365 lays out penalties for those establishing and managing places for prostitution. The UAE also issued Law No. 39 in 2006 on international judicial cooperation, which includes articles on the extradition of suspected or convicted criminals to judicial

authorities to try them or execute the sentences given to them. It also provides for mutual judicial assistance in criminal cases, including human trafficking (Articles 6-37).

A Cabinet order established the UAE National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in April 2007 to coordinate anti-human trafficking efforts at all levels in the seven emirates of the federation. The Committee includes representatives from the federal ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, as well as State Security and the UAE Red Crescent Society. In February, the Cabinet strengthened the two-year-old body by adding public prosecutors and law enforcement officers to its membership.

The responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Studying and revising human trafficking legislation with a view to enhancing and securing necessary protection in accordance with international standards.
- Preparing reports on efforts taken by the UAE to fight human trafficking, in coordination with other authorities and relevant bodies in the country.
- Studying reports related to human trafficking and taking relevant action towards realising their recommendations.
- Coordinating among the government authorities concerned with the issue of human trafficking such as ministries, departments, corporations and organisations, as well as coordinating follow-up actions taken to achieve these objectives.
- Promoting public awareness on matters related to human trafficking through conferences, seminars, brochures, training and other means in order to achieve the goals of the committee.
- Participating in international conferences and forums related to combating human trafficking.

- The Committee, which meets frequently, is committed to continuously encouraging additional progressive and aggressive legislative efforts to assure country-wide compliance with international standards and implementation of the laws that are in place.

As part of its comprehensive national and international strategy to combat trafficking, the UAE has ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), which is one of the two protocols attached to the Organized Crime Convention.

II) ENFORCEMENT

The UAE federal government and those of the seven individual emirates have focused on increasing awareness for the enforcement of anti-human trafficking laws. According to official reports, at least 20 human trafficking-related cases were registered last year under the clauses of Federal Law 51 – 12 in Dubai, three each in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, as well as one each in Ajman and Ras Al-Khaimah. This represents a 100 percent increase in registered cases compared to 2007, suggesting that the combatting process is gradually, but surely, intensifying.

It is worth noting that human trafficking cases are no longer confined to one emirate. This indicates that the UAE’s efforts in disseminating information among officials and the public are coming to fruition. The Committee anticipates further improvement with the launch of an anti-human trafficking publicity campaign. Further, an official website (www.nccht.gov.ae/) to serve as an official information source has been launched. This is expected to serve as an effective channel for public awareness and a tool of communication between the people and the committee.

Notably, there were also convictions in at least six cases as opposed to five during the previous year. While four of these convictions were in Dubai, Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaimah also recorded one conviction each.

There was a significant change in the severity of penalties against traffickers. While the convicted received jail terms ranging from three to 10 years for committing, aiding or abetting human trafficking during 2007-2008, at least two – one each in Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaimah – received life sentence during 2008-2009, with the remaining sentenced to varied prison terms.

Numbers of Human Trafficking - Victims, Cases and Accused – 2008

Emirate	Number of		
	Cases	Victims	Accused
Abu Dhabi	3	6	6
Dubai	12	14	20
Sharjah	3	6	11
Ajman	1	4	2
Ras Al Khaimah	1	2	4
Umm Al Quwwain	-	-	-
Fujairah	-	-	-
Total	20	32	43

■ Source: Abu Dhabi Public Prosecution, Dubai Public Prosecution, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior, UAE

With these improved results in registration, prosecution and conviction, the UAE is working harder to gather and deploy the necessary manpower to efficiently increase the crackdown against human trafficking activities. These include:

- In November, Abu Dhabi Police discovered and obstructed an attempt by an international organised crime ring to traffic persons to Europe via the UAE's airports. The gang, run by trans-continental professional criminals, attempted to take advantage of loopholes in the security system and passenger transfer procedures used by some international airlines and traffic Asian nationals to European countries.
- As part of a comprehensive effort to curb repeat exploitation of those permitted to leave the UAE without valid documents, tighter controls were put in place by way of iris scans introduced in 2003. According to the interior ministry, more than 320,000 people failed their iris scans while attempting to re-enter during the last five years. Of these, 123,000 failed the scan in 2008, 54,000 of them in Dubai.
- A new visa regime aimed at curbing illegal recruitments came into effect in July. Under the new system, 16 different categories of visas and health insurance have been made compulsory for all visa types. The entry permits are not only much more expensive than before to discourage criminals from exploiting the vulnerable, but have been made more diversified to include long- and short-term visit visas.

As part of a comprehensive awareness campaign to enhance public and law enforcement knowledge about this crime and explore ways of limiting it, workshops and training sessions are being conducted by the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in cooperation with various law enforcement departments and ministries. These

workshops are attended by the relevant departments of naturalisation and residency, police and public prosecution.

One such effort was undertaken in January when 80 officials held a brainstorming session to discuss the national strategy against human trafficking. Attended by senior representatives from law enforcement and the judiciary departments of both federal and local governments, the seminar focussed on the need for more training to equip police officers and other law enforcement personnel to better identify potential trafficking cases and monitor companies supplying workers in order to prevent abuses.

During the seminar, officials were urged to tighten control on labour supply offices and ensure they do not abuse newly recruited labourers. Furthermore, they were also advised to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking of domestic workers. The officials were instructed to focus on more prosecutions and work towards a centralised documentation system on trafficking to better understand the extent of the problem.

Following the directives of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, all law enforcement departments in the country, including police, prosecutors and immigration, have been conducting specialised annual training programmes and workshops to acquire the required skills to better tackle the crime.

LABOUR REFORMS

The UAE is aware that in order to intensify its anti-human trafficking drive, labour mobility needs to be effectively managed through the formulation of appropriate legal and policy frameworks, through the development of administrative structures and on-going capacity building.

In the past, progress towards these objectives has been seriously hampered because the countries of origin and destination often had separate agendas as well as different priorities for action. However, the UAE now attaches great importance to improving dialogue with individual countries of origin and seeking the establishment of broader consultations at the multilateral level.

Despite the challenges, the UAE is aiming to manage and govern the working environment in line with international laws and best international labour practices in key areas such as highly regulated standards of labour accommodation, payment of wages on time and mechanisms to address grievances and have them dealt with justly.

Some of these measures include:

- A fast-track labour committee centre set up in Dubai to help workers address complaints, without going to court, witnessed 390 cases being handled during the past year. This centre exists in addition to the special labour courts set up in Dubai in November 2006 with a special prosecutor to handle all labour disputes.
- As part of its commitment to improving the quality of life for workers and inculcating respect for human rights among private companies, Dubai Police's 18-month drive ending November 2008 resulted in the collection of 52 million dirhams (\$14.2 million) in unpaid labour wages from various companies.

- In an unprecedented verdict in October, a company manager in Dubai was jailed and fined 6.45 million dirhams (\$1.75 million) for illegally employing 94 workers who were sponsored by other companies.
- In September, the Dubai Community Development Authority (DCDA) was established. All human rights violation cases earlier reported to the Human Rights Department will now be dealt by this newly-created institution. The family security department, social services programmes, Training and Drug Rehabilitation Centre will all operate under the aegis of the DCDA. This is an entity that is specifically mandated to enhance social development and national identity, as well as strengthen the role of citizens in society.
- In October, the labour ministry created an agency to protect the interests of foreign workers. It monitors complaints from workers about unpaid wages and regulate labour conflicts that emerge over salaries.
- In January, minimum wages for private security guards, working across the country, came into effect. The new pay structure was part of a decree that clarified the regulations and codes, governing the private security industry in the country.

III) VICTIM SUPPORT

To ensure that these unequivocally resolute legislation and enforcement mechanism have a human face, the UAE's holistic approach includes significant initiatives that determine how victims are treated by law enforcement officials, as well as expand the help and welfare programmes available to them. The programmes are designed to be prompt and just. The government firmly believes that those who are sexually exploited must be treated as victims, protected and supported through counselling and rehabilitation programmes. At the same time, whoever drove the concerned person into prostitution or coerced labour will be punished according to UAE law.

The government has a healthy track record of providing assistance and protection to victims of sexual abuse. The police departments provide shelter and counselling for these victims. The government works with foreign governments and NGOs when cases are brought to its attention. Victims have been given protection and shelter while their paperwork is processed, and are then repatriated at the government's expense under the 'Crime Victim Assistance Program.'

A report by the Ministry of Interior in December recommended that victims of human trafficking should be compensated through a fund created with the confiscated money and property of people smugglers. The report, "A Review of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Law," calls for "expanding the scope of confiscation" to punish criminals while helping those they exploit.

Aside from government-headed initiatives, charitable and social networks are also active in the UAE. Foremost among these is the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC), which was established in 2007 to provide support and psychological care to all women, both nationals and expatriates, who are victims of human

trafficking, domestic violence, family neglect, employer abuse and other social problems.

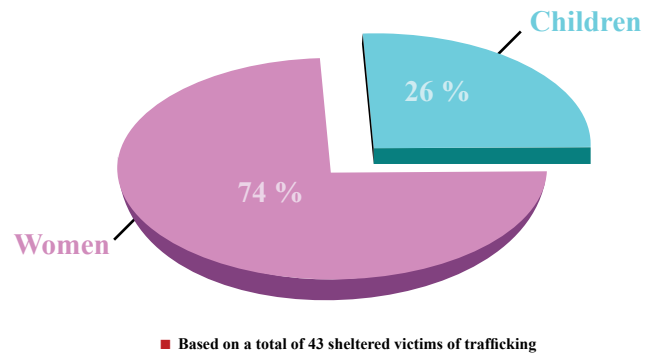
The shelter is the first step towards institutionalising victim support in line with international standards. It is governed by an independent board and has linked up with international shelters to introduce best practices in shelter management and administration. The foundation plays a vital role in improving social services for victims by providing a refuge to overcome the psychological and physical effects of violence, oppression and neglect.

The foundation has an in-house school, which can accommodate up to 300 students; lawns surrounding the complex; indoor playroom for children of victims; a well-equipped gymnasium, as well as football, basketball and volleyball facilities for adults; and an in-house restaurant.

The following details shed light on the activities of the shelter in Dubai between September 2007 – when it started operations – and December 2008:

- Total number of human trafficking-related victims handled by the foundation is 43.
- Only five of the 43 victims continued to be under the care of the foundation by the end of 2008.
- The majority of cases were referred to the foundation by the Dubai Police, followed by various other human rights departments. Two cases were self referrals.
- The duration of stay by the victims of trafficking varied between one day and five months, which translates into an average of 48 days.

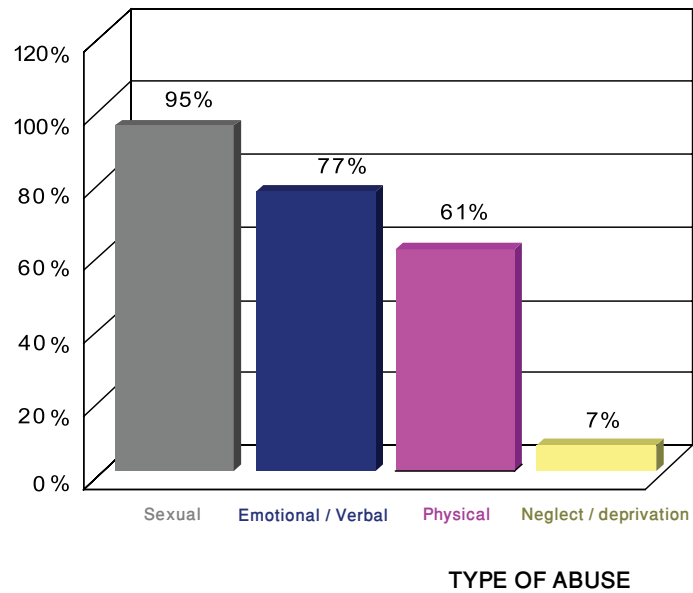
Women and Children Victims of Trafficking at DFWAC



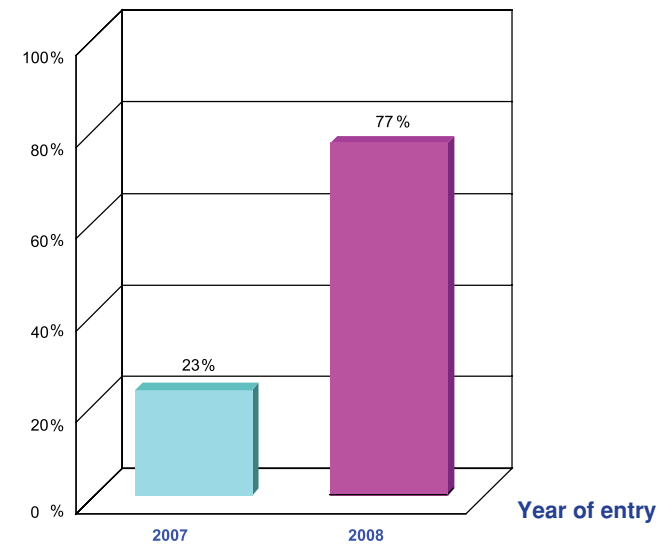
Referral sites for victims of trafficking at Dubai shelter till end of 2008

No.	Referral site	No. of cases	Percent
1	Dubai Police/CID	34	79.1%
2	Human Rights Departments	4	9.3%
3	Self	2	4.7%
4	Dubai Prosecution	1	2.3%
5	Police/Other Emirates	1	2.3%
6	Previously existing non-licensed shelter	1	2.3%
6	Previously existing non-licensed shelter	1	2.3%

Types of Abuse Experienced by Victims of Trafficking



Victims of Trafficking at DFWAC (by year of entry)



EWAA- SHELTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ABU DHABI

Under the umbrella of the UAE Red Crescent Authority, Ewaa -- Shelter for Women and Children, Abu Dhabi, opened in late 2008. The shelter is currently providing assistance to 15 human trafficking victims. All victims are entitled to rehabilitation and receive further assistance in medical and psychological support. As part of its comprehensive premises, Ewaa has residential facilities, reading room, craftwork facilities, meeting room, office space, and provision for in-house social workers, fully-equipped clinic, gymnasium and swimming pool.

More such shelters are planned across the country. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking is also studying a mechanism of laws and bylaws that would facilitate the process of giving licences to more shelters.

Other organisations offering similar social services are the Social Support Center of the Abu Dhabi Police and the Human Rights Care Department of Dubai Police. The resources of all these institutions are increasingly being utilised.

CAMEL JOCKEYS

The UAE's most high-profile effort to address human trafficking occurred a few years ago in response to recruitment practices taking place in the traditional sport of camel racing. Once aware of the illegal child exploitation occurring in this sport, the UAE government immediately stepped in and requested technical expertise from UNICEF to help protect and rehabilitate child victims.

The Ministries of Social Affairs and Interior, in coordination with the country's Special Committee for Rehabilitation of Camel Jockeys and UNICEF, continue to pursue follow-up action.

During the period beginning May 2005, the efforts of the UAE and the UNICEF resulted in a multinational progress review in September 2006, wherein all 1077 child camel jockeys were successfully and safely returned to their home countries in Asia and Africa. Child protection experts and government representatives from the UAE, Bangladesh, Mauritania, Pakistan and Sudan, as well as UNICEF officials participated in the review process and evaluated both results and gaps to support and reintegrate children involved in camel racing.

A rehabilitation centre for young former camel jockeys was established in Abu Dhabi, the first of its kind in the world and provided shelter and rehabilitation programs. The repatriation and rehabilitation program included establishment of transit centers providing medical assistance and other services to affected children, a family tracing system, social care of children, educational campaigns and establishment of community care committees.

- The repatriation and rehabilitation program was then estimated at 10 million dirhams (\$2.75 million), funded entirely by the UAE.
- A year after the rehabilitation program began, several

cooperation initiatives were acknowledged in a review meeting in September 2006, including:

- 1) Awareness campaigns with camel owners in the UAE
 - 2) Establishment of transit centers providing medical assistance and other services to affected children in Sudan
 - 3) Family tracing system verified by justice authorities in Mauritania
 - 4) Social care of children and back-to-school campaigns in Pakistan
 - 5) Establishment of community care committees in Bangladesh
 - 6) Maintaining follow-up mechanisms empowering NGOs and local institutions to oversee the payment of outstanding salaries to child beneficiaries
- While efforts are underway to strengthen comprehensive reintegration procedures, the UAE and UNICEF agreed in April 2007 to establish a second and expanded phase of their program, which will now continue until May 2009. As a follow-up measure, the UAE committed 29 million dirhams (\$8 million), which will help in country-based interventions to tackle trafficking by focusing on the establishment of monitoring mechanisms to prevent children formerly involved in camel racing from re-entering hazardous or exploitative labour.
 - In the most recent efforts, a senior Ministry of Interior delegation started assessing the progress made in rehabilitating former child camel jockeys. Last May, the seven-member team travelled to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sudan and Mauritania to meet government officials, as well as some of the former jockeys and their families.

- In October, a group of Bangladeshi children -- who worked as camel jockeys in the UAE and repatriated more than three years ago -- received about 185,000 dirhams (\$50,000) in compensation.
- In February, the UAE and Mauritania formally closed the files of about 560 children who were camel jockeys in the past and have now been settled back in their homeland, according to the UAE Special Committee for Rehabilitation of Camel Jockeys.
- In all, the UAE has run 26 social and economic projects related to rehabilitating and reintegrating the former camel jockeys into their home societies.

IV. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Human trafficking in the UAE has its point of origin in the home countries of guest workers. Recognising the need for coordinating anti-human trafficking efforts with labour-exporting countries, the UAE has signed agreements with several labour-exporting countries – India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Thailand and Philippines – during the last few years to regulate the flow of the labour workforce. In order to deny unscrupulous private recruitment agencies from cheating and trafficking workers, all labour contract transactions would be processed by labour ministries or offices in the sending countries.

- At least 15 law enforcement officials were part of various programmes at the International Training Centre for Human Trafficking Prevention, part of the Belarus Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in July.
- According to a December report by the Bangladesh embassy in the UAE, incidents of human trafficking have dropped significantly. In cooperation with the UAE government, Dhaka

is monitoring the system of recruitment. Recruiting agents have been asked to submit monthly reports about the cases of women workers they handle. Recruitment agencies have been made to deposit substantial amount of money during registration with the Bangladesh government, which could be lost in case of fraudulent activities.

- Similarly, following a combined effort, the Indonesian embassy in Abu Dhabi reported in March that there was a 36 percent drop in the number of incidents of exploitation of Indonesian housemaids in Abu Dhabi emirate in 2008 compared to the previous year.
- In another example of joint efforts with India, officials have been appointed in the state of Kerala to conduct investigations at a local level and prosecute agents involved in trafficking to the UAE. The Indian government is considering appointing similar investigators in other states as well. Further, India is focusing on pre-departure training for women and men travelling to the Gulf to work as housemaids and construction workers. By July 2008, 15,000 workers had undergone pre-departure training and New Delhi is targeting training 150,000 more during the next five years.
- The labour ministry, in coordination with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), has begun the process of establishing the “Decent Work Country Programme”. This is a protocol of technical cooperation covering four key areas – employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work. The preparatory phase identifies the country’s priorities under each of these four workstreams. The ILO technical team is involved in engaging government officials, employers and professional associations in the formulation of priorities, goals and deliverables of this programme.

- In consultation with other Gulf Cooperation Council member states, the UAE proposed to the Indian and the Philippines governments to set up a pilot project to survey and document best practices in the management of the temporary contractual employment cycle. The three governments have now agreed to collaborate towards the development of such a pilot project with expert input from the Arab Labour Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the International Organisation on Migration. The overall goal of the project is to test a range of practical measures that will serve to improve the quality of life and work of contractual workers. The project seeks to improve the quality of recruitment, induction and other pre-deployment processes, as well as provides the workers with decent working and living conditions during their temporary contractual employment and residency in the host country. Two important innovations have improved the situation: the preparation of temporary contractual workers for return to their country of origin; and the facilitation of their ultimate return to and reintegration into their home communities. All this will be undertaken in a spirit of shared responsibility and partnership. The project will leverage the introduction in the UAE of new policy guidelines and enforceable measures that ensure the protection of wages, the provision of adequate work and living conditions, access to avenues of legal redress, and the upholding of fundamental human rights. The UAE hopes to draw from this attempt the substance of a draft comprehensive regional framework for cooperation among Asian countries of origin and destination that will demonstrate lessons learnt and best practices in the effective administration of the full temporary contractual employment cycle. The formulation of this future framework for regional cooperation was a key recommendation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in early 2008.

- In efforts to both gain from and share with the anti-human trafficking experiences of international organisations and the global community:
 - ▶ The UAE participated in a regional conference on human trafficking organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for law enforcement agencies in Kabul in October and shared its experiences in combatting the crime with other international delegates.
 - ▶ A two-day training programme was held in February in cooperation with the IOM, which was aimed at improving the knowledge base of the UAE law enforcement officials dealing with human trafficking cases.
 - ▶ In March, a UAE delegation was part of a two-day conference titled “Human Trafficking at the Crossroads – Private-Public Partnership to Fight Human Trafficking” in Bahrain.
- In February, the UAE’s anti-human trafficking efforts received a boost with the publication of the “Global Report on Trafficking Persons” released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The report was funded through a donation of 55 million dirhams (\$15 million) made to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN. GIFT) by Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. The “first global report on modern slavery”, covering 155 countries, contained some critical and important revelations, including the fact that 40 percent of all countries had not yet convicted a single trafficker.
- Four cases of human trafficking-related extradition requests were recorded in 2008. While the extradition process was concluded in one case, the process was aborted in the other three instances for the following reasons: accused left the country prior to the start of the extradition process; the country seeking the extradition cancelled the request; and one country

failed to send an official order to effect the extradition.

- It is important to highlight that the Working Group Report on the UAE's Universal Periodic Review was unanimously adopted at the 10th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in March. One of the critical areas addressed in the UAE's report that was first presented in December 2008 was human trafficking. The UAE made two specific voluntary commitments in its bid to tackle the crime – first, ratifying the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which was fulfilled through an official notification in February; and second, a national media campaign to enhance public awareness about human trafficking is scheduled to be implemented next month. This is aimed at uniting the country’s efforts at stemming this crime and specifically fostering a partnership between the public and private sectors. The multi-lingual media campaign aims to enforce the UAE’s efforts in dealing with the problem and explain the legal implications of the crime, thus acting as a “deterrent” for criminals.
- In future, the UAE will invite special rapporteurs on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to visit the country.

CONCLUSION

Before viewing it as an international problem that needs global action, the UAE is approaching the problem as one that is unacceptable to our Islamic and Arab culture and value system. The UAE believes that human trafficking is a despicable crime and it will diligently work to combat this practice in any form. The government is acting on every front of its four-pillar strategy: legislation, enforcement, victim support, as well as bilateral agreements and international cooperation. Since acknowledging the problem is the first step towards solving it, all other efforts continue to be work in progress and the laws of the country are being geared towards adhering to international standards.

The UAE will continue to demonstrate resolve, and acknowledge where it needs to improve. Simultaneously, the UAE will continue to cooperate with all appropriate regional and international law enforcement officials to apprehend, prosecute and punish those violating the UAE's human trafficking law and those attempting to use the country as a channel to violate anti-trafficking laws of other countries.

The country is also committed to serving as a model for change in the region and an active member of the international community. It continues to welcome direct discussion and collaboration with other governments, public or private sector groups, or international organisations that share the vision of stemming the tide of human trafficking.

The UAE has made significant progress in a short period of time, but realises that much more needs to be done, and is ready to move ahead constructively and systematically to end this exploitation of human life and dignity.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

c/o Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs
P.O. Box 130000, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 2 4041000 / 4041139; Fax: +971 2 4041144 / 4041155



United Arab Emirates

