

# Southern Africa

## Human Trafficking Report for the Santa Marta Group

The bishops of South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana met with the bishops of Mozambique between 9-11<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 to discuss the growing phenomenon of trafficking in Persons in the Southern African region. Members of the police force, border patrol, NGOs working in this area and civil servants participated. A reasonably clear picture emerged from the reflections. The bishops and their support staff from each country gave insights from their particular countries. There was a special emphasis on the causes of trafficking, the emerging routes used by traffickers, the various cultural practices used to conceal the phenomenon and the various responses from governments and civil society. There was also a good discussion on the political processes. The compliance with the Palermo Protocol and the status of legislation in each of the countries. There will be a follow up meeting in March 2018. S. Marta members, Archbishop Stephen Brislin and Fr Peter-John Pearson from South Africa and Sr Martines Biasibetti, Bishop Adriano Langa and Mr Gabriel Bertani from Mozambique attended this meeting and some of them presented papers to the gathering.

The SACBC continues to host a special desk dealing with this issue under the direction of Sr Melanie O'Connor HF. This desk deals with pastoral responses to the scourge of trafficking in persons and is at the fore front of prevention campaigns in the faith community.

The SACBC Parliamentary Liaison Office subsequently provided follow up by publishing a summary of the annual Trafficking in Persons Report 2017 which classifies various countries in terms of their commitment to fighting trafficking in Persons.

The CPLO also periodically produces Digests on the topic which is a compilation of links to various articles on the topic and is an easy resource for those working in the area.

On 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup> November the Diocese of Manzini in Swaziland a Round Table on the topic of Human Trafficking addressed by the local Ordinary, Bishop Jose Ponce de Leon, Fr Peter-John Pearson from the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office in South Africa and a member of the S. Marta Group. Inspector Dhlamini from the Swaziland Police, Mrs Lukhele the head of the Anti-Trafficking Unit in the Prime Ministers Office and Mrs Motse of the St Anne's Sodality all addressed the meeting. The St Annes Sodality has special responsibility for this program.

A new development initiated by the African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching, (a Forum operating in Southern and East Africa to promote Catholic Social Teaching in the public domain and especially in public policy issues) based in Harare Zimbabwe, has come into being. Following a Conference on Human Trafficking and a Catholic Response, in Nairobi in 2016, AFCAST published the papers in book form. After the book launch in Harare a small group of people concerned with the issue began to meet under the auspices of AFCAST and provide a pastoral platform to assist trafficked persons. This is one of the few pastoral platforms in Zimbabwe. At present it has contact with 14 Zimbabwean women who had been trafficked to Kuwait. A key thrust has been assisting the survivors with professional counselling. AFCAST also organises awareness raising programs in Catholic schools in Harare and the program is in the preparatory stage for a roll out in the 7 other dioceses. Recently Mrs Dadirai Chikwekwete published an article in the Archdiocese of Harare newspaper. The voluntary program is spearheaded by Sr Janice Mc Loughlin MM and Mrs Dadirai Chikwekwete. Fr Peter-John Pearson, the chairperson of AFCAST is a member of the Santa Marta Group.