

Locked Down and Locked-in

Standing Against Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: 30 November 2020 at 10:00 am EST, in honor of the International Women Human Rights Defenders Day

Co-Organizers: Nadia's Initiative & United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

COVID-19 is severely undermining efforts to end gender-based violence and human trafficking through reduced access to prevention and protection, such as social services and care, and increased incidences of violence. As COVID-19 lockdowns have driven societies off their own streets, they have also driven crime further underground.

Out of sight of law enforcement, human trafficking is surging. For those being trafficked, the pandemic has rendered them more confined and exposed than ever, in close and constant proximity to their abusers. With COVID-19 destabilizing societies and enabling the perpetuation of human trafficking, we can no longer pretend that gender-based violence and trafficking are detached from the greater inequities and vulnerabilities of our societies.

Women human rights defenders are taking a stand against this underlying social pandemic. As survivors are finding their voice –transforming from victims into activists– it is time for the world to join the call. The global community must take meaningful action now to support women and marginalized communities who will be suffering the consequences of COVID-19 for years to come.

This event will examine the state of gender-based violence and human trafficking amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, acknowledging the invaluable contributions of women rights defenders in the field. Experts, activists, and practitioners will help define actionable next steps that UN bodies and Member States can take to make meaningful progress in preventing and responding to sexual violence and human trafficking.

Targeting a broader audience, the event will also sensitize the public to the dangers of human trafficking, as human trafficking and sexual violence can happen anywhere and to anyone.

Moderator:

Mira Sorvino | UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for Global Fight Against Human Trafficking

Speakers:

Nadia Murad | UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Nobel Laureate & President of Nadia's Initiative

Ashely Judd | Global Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Agency for Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights

Ozark Henry | National Goodwill Ambassador for Belgium Against Human Trafficking

Ghada Fathi Waly | Executive Director, UNODC