

U.S. Bishops Call for End to Human Trafficking

Urge Congress to Reauthorize Victims Protection Act

In a statement released Wednesday, Bishop Gerald Barnes of San Bernardino, California, chairman of the episcopal Committee on Migration, asked that the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), set to expire in October, be reauthorized.

"This legislation should be reauthorized, adequately funded, and aggressively implemented," said Bishop Barnes, while noting that "as many as 700,000 persons are trafficked globally each year, men, women, and children."

Human trafficking, the bishop added, is a "horrific crime against the basic human dignity and rights of the human person."

Bishop Barnes included in his statement a request for the federal government to place emphasis on the recovery and care of victims, particularly "child trafficking victims, who are most susceptible to the long-term horrors of this crime."

In his statement the 62-year-old prelate also asked that the general public, and Catholics specifically, work together to end human trafficking.

Bishop Barnes wrote: "We call attention to this tragic reality to raise awareness among Catholics and others of good will about its devastating impact on vulnerable persons.

"We urge Catholics to work together to identify survivors of human trafficking and to help rescue them from their bondage."

"In the end," the bishop stated, "we must work together -- church, state and community -- to eliminate the root causes and markets that permit traffickers to flourish; to make whole the survivors of this crime; and to ensure that one day soon trafficking in human persons vanishes from the face of the earth."

=====

ZE07091405

2007-09-14

=====

This article is from the ZENIT news agency.