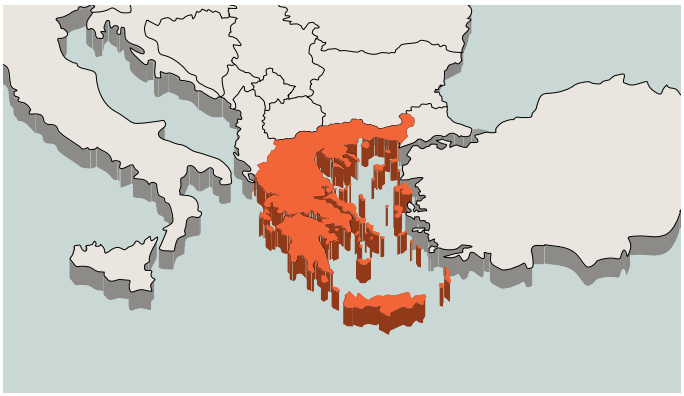
IMPACT REPORT 2023

GREECE

Greece is identified as both a transit and destination country for human trafficking,[1] with victims exploited both on the mainland and the islands or transported through Greece along migration routes into Western Europe. Refugees entering and passing through Greece are particularly at risk of exploitation due to lack of support, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with their rights or the avenues for assistance from authorities.

In 2023, A21 Greece (A21) observed trafficking victims in Greece mainly originating from Latin American and African countries, such as Colombia, Venezuela, Cameroon and Sierra Leone, and a smaller number of European nations, compared to the previous year. Since its establishment in 2008, A21's Aftercare Program in Greece has directly assisted survivors from 55 different nations. Sex trafficking remains the predominant form of exploitation, with victims often recruited from their home countries through false job offers or through 'romantic relationships', only then to be exploited in Greece. Many African refugees are trafficked before arriving in Greece, with identification as trafficking victims occurring after entry into the country. Forced labour, although present, is largely unreported, especially in small, remote towns near agricultural areas, due to a lack of awareness. False job opportunities, where traffickers use false employment openings to target vulnerable individuals, are one of the most common recruitment tactics used by traffickers.[2] Following this trend,the majority of the survivors entering A21's Aftercare Program in 2023 reported being recruited by traffickers via false job opportunities (76.4%), with the promise of a better life and a proposed salary multiple times higher than their earning potential at home.

In 2023, A21 noticed increased reports to the nationally operated A21 human trafficking hotline (1109 Hotline) and the subsequent law enforcement operations that resulted in the recoveries of dozens of trafficking victims.



A21'S RESPONSE

Since 2008, A21 has actively engaged in combatting human trafficking in Greece. Through its extensive experience, A21 recognises that the most effective strategy involves fostering close partnerships and collaboration with government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that share similar goals. Alongside this approach, A21 implements initiatives focused on raising awareness and implementing prevention programs. The 1109 Hotline plays a crucial role in A21's intervention strategy, aiding in the detection of victims and collaborating with local law enforcement when warranted. Upon identification or referral of a victim, A21 offers a holistic, trauma-informed aftercare program that prioritises restoration and reintegration, complemented by essential legal services to ensure survivors have access to justice against their perpetrators.

PREVENTION & AWARENESS

Over the last 15 years, A21 has worked with local and national partners to expand access to prevention and education materials for vulnerable populations, and to raise awareness of human trafficking with the general public. In 2023, A21 reached over 22,000 people through these prevention, education and awareness materials. A21's prevention efforts focused on children of all ages through local schools and the refugees living in Greece through NGO partnerships. These efforts resulted in 11,383 people being reached with prevention and education programs. A21 predominantly focused its awareness efforts on events that engage the public and pursue collaboration with human trafficking stakeholders such as local government agencies, embassies and other NGOs. A21 participated in 174 such awareness events across Greece, reaching 11,446 individuals. Additionally, A21's use of social media to raise awareness of human trafficking resulted in 71.8 million impressions.

WALK FOR FREEDOM

A21's annual global awareness event, Walk For Freedom (WFF),[3] occurred in four key cities (Thessaloniki, Athens, Patra and Limassol) across Greece and Cyprus. More than 400 students, teachers, collaborators, professionals, significant political figures, survivors of exploitation and members of the public attended and over 1,200 awareness materials were distributed that day.

Building on the partnerships developed in 2022, A21 hosted an 'after-walk event' in both Thessaloniki and Athens featuring a photography gallery and A21's *Can You See Me? (CYSM?)* 'Seaside' public awareness video to promote conversation around human trafficking in Greece. The gallery consisted of two collections: the first collection was the human trafficking awareness campaign released in December 2022 in collaboration with film director Konstantinos Mousoulis, award-winning photographer Akis Douslatzis, and Greek public figures Maria Korintiou, Ifegenia Tzla and Errika Prezerakou, and the second was Akis Douslatzis' collection titled 'Violence against women'.



LAUNCH OF THE *CAN YOU SEE ME?* CAMPAIGN

In October 2023, A21 launched its *Can You See Me? (CYSM?)*[4] campaign in Athens. The event included the premiere of the *CYSM?* short film 'Seaside', in conjunction with a case study presentation of the June 2023 joint international operation facilitated in Greece with INTERPOL, which resulted in the recovery of 52 women and the arrest of 11 members of a trafficking ring. Key stakeholders such as the U.S. and Colombian Embassies, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Ministry of Citizen Protection, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Security, Hellenic Police and the Anti-Trafficking Police Division, attended the event. The presentation highlighted the successful dismantling of a criminal enterprise and the recovery of dozens of human trafficking victims as a direct result of collaborative efforts by law enforcement and NGOs. Moreover, the presentation showcased A21's successful approach to combatting human trafficking. The embassies for the United States, Colombia and Mexico, in both Thessaloniki and Athens, in response, invited A21 to multiple meetings to present A21's work and strategy with key shareholders. Following the launch event, *CYSM?* had 28 million impressions through various media channels and hard copy materials.





Key supporters of the launch of A21's CYSM? campaign. From top left: Mrs. Voultepsi, Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum, Mr. Tsounis, U.S. Embassador, Mr. Moskof, General Secretary for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, Mr. Vanikiotis, member of Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Council of Europe, and Mr. Skouras who represented the Ministry of Civil Protection.

AWARENESS EVENTS ACROSS GREECE

In response to invitations from various entities throughout Greece, A21 engaged in 105 speaking engagements in 2023 that reached more than 5,000 people. The engagements focused on the importance of recognising human trafficking as a local crime and the role of the 1109 Hotline in this endeavour. To ensure diversity of audience and style, A21 pursued a wide variety of events, including a TEDx event organised by the University of Komotini, an interactive discussion after an anti-trafficking-themed theatre production in Athens, in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and the 4th 'Connected We Stand' Festival, an event composed by civil society organisations, by the invitation of the non-profit organisation IASIS.



AWARENESS & PREVENTION FOR THE YOUTH

Understanding that children are a key vulnerable population, A21 aims to educate children on their rights and the potential risks of human trafficking and exploitation, both on and offline. Following the implementation of A21's interactive programs, A21's Primary Prevention Program (PPP) and Human Trafficking Awareness Program (HTAP) in 2022, A21 focused on expanding access to age-appropriate anti-trafficking education and prevention materials in 2023. The PPP is a play-based, age-appropriate program designed for children aged 6 to 12, and HTAP is an awareness program for students aged 13 to 18. In 2023, after the Ministry of Education approved A21's PPP and HTAP for the second consecutive year, A21 facilitated these programs across 41 schools throughout Greece, educating 3,199 students.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Recognising the need to continue expanding the accessibility of materials, A21 connected with Vaggelis Avgoulas, founder of 'Me alla Matia', an NGO that collaborates with governmental entities and organisations to promote awareness for people with disabilities. This collaboration began the process of A21's materials becoming more accessible to individuals with disabilities. As ensuring access to human trafficking awareness materials for disabled individuals had previously not been prioritised in Greece, this collaboration signifies an advancement in educating all areas of the general public.

IDENTIFICATION & INTERVENTION

A21's identification and intervention efforts include operating the 1109 Hotline, a 24/7 nationally available human trafficking hotline available for anyone to anonymously report suspicious activity, and providing training for 'frontline professionals', those most likely to encounter potential victims of trafficking in their field of work.



Press release conference by Hellenic Police discussing the operation that led to the recovery of 52 women.

1109 HOTLINE

In 2023, the 1109 Hotline was contacted 2,394 times, a 41.8% increase from 2022, likely due to the ongoing frontline professional training and prevention and awareness efforts nationwide. The 1109 Hotline received reports from various sources, including potential victims, community members, law enforcement, government workers and NGOs. The 1109 Hotline assisted 145 victims of trafficking in 2023, of which 60% were screened and identified by A21, while 40% were requests for referral to aftercare services. Detailed analysis, including victim demographics, recruitment tactics and other data insights can be found in the accompanying A21 Greece's 2023 Hotline Report.

PARTNERING WITH THE POLICE ON VICTIM IDENTIFICATION OPERATIONS

As a result of strong relationships built with law enforcement, in 2023, Greek police invited A21 to partner in a number of significant operations targeting human trafficking rings and the recovery of victims. A21 focused on screening potential victims and providing emergency support services at these operations.

Significantly, 2023 marked the first year where a tip from the 1109 Hotline led to a transnational takedown operation by INTERPOL, Greek law enforcement and other international law enforcement, resulting in the dismantling of an internationally operated trafficking ring and the recovery of dozens of sex trafficking victims. A21 Spain played a significant role in providing additional intelligence to the ongoing investigation in Greece, highlighting the importance of cross-country collaboration. Moreover, staff from A21 Greece supported the recovered victims with direct services on the day of the operation.

Through continued collaboration with law enforcement, in 2023 A21 supported four large-scale operations involving the 1109 Hotline, resulting in the arrest of traffickers and recovery of victims. A21's involvement ranged from providing key intelligence submitted to the 1109 Hotline to providing trained aftercare staff to support newly recovered victims to representing the survivors

in subsequent criminal prosecutions against their traffickers. Detailed information related to the 1109 Hotline's involvement in these criminal investigations and subsequent arrests can be found in the accompanying A21 Greece's 2023 Hotline Report.

As a result of close collaboration through the years, and training by A21, law enforcement understood the importance of utilising a victim-centred approach in their investigations, including involving NGOs such as A21. In August 2023, the police dismantled a human trafficking network involving the illegal trade of ova and illegal surrogacies through a fertility clinic. Under Greek legislation, the use of force, fraud or coercion in this situation would constitute organ and tissue trafficking.[5] Per the police's request, A21 staff members travelled to Crete to speak with all 30 potential victims and offered services. Eight of the trafficking survivors requested further support services from A21, including basic needs, relocation and legal services.



TRAINING FRONTLINE PROFESSIONALS

Recognising that limited resources and training for frontline professionals contribute to the low rates of identified victims,[6] A21 prioritises frontline professional training. In 2023, A21 broadened the scope of training topics, understanding the increasing need for specialised training sessions tailored to frontline professionals from different fields. Participants included police officers, labour inspectors, lawyers, medical professionals, border guard officers, social workers, psychologists, interpreters and refugee workers from various agencies and organisations in different cities throughout Greece. In total, A21 trained 1,233 professionals throughout the year.

To provide specialised training and pursue interagency collaboration that would increase investigations of labour trafficking cases, A21 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Independent Authority of Hellenic Labour Inspectorate (HLI) for the training of labour inspectors in different cities across Greece and the promotion of A21's *CYSM*? 'City of Ghosts' public awareness video about labour trafficking in 2023. In the following months, A21 conducted four professional trainings for labour inspectors and police officers in Athens, Thessaloniki and Crete, with the participation of significant high-level speakers from law enforcement, the HLI, a public prosecutor and a judge. In total, A21 trained 245 professionals on labour trafficking. These trainings proved effective when a labour inspector trainee later led an inspection resulting in the discovery of a labour exploitation case involving 45 migrant workers, including five minors.



Building on years of trusted collaboration, A21 continued to develop its relationship with the police and partnered with the Police Union of Central Macedonia and the Anti-Trafficking Police Division in Thessaloniki. As a result of these collaborations, A21 conducted human trafficking training for 184 police officers across four cities, Thessaloniki, Alexandroupolis, Serres, and Katerini. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum coordinated two professional trainings and invited A21 to deliver a legal presentation on the 'Prevention and access of vulnerable population to labour: The difference between forced labour and labour exploitation, protection, definitions, rights and recent case studies'. This expansive training educated participants not only about human trafficking and trafficking victims' rights under the law, but also on the relevant law for migrants and refugees and their rights under those legal provisions. Finally, A21 further explained labour exploitation, and legal rights and avenues for relief for those exploited, but not trafficked. Training participants included representatives and professionals, such as interpreters, camp coordinators, and administrative staff, amongst others, working in refugee camps as well as asylum seekers and other vulnerable populations. Representatives from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims (NRM), the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection, the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also participated as both speakers and attendees of this forum.

A21 PRESENTS AT INTERPOL

A21's national and global individual and collaborative efforts led to participation in international and European conferences, including an invitation to present at the 11th INTERPOL Global Conference on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling for expert groups on A21's work and observations in the field and A21's collaboration with law enforcement. This conference sought to explore the engagement of national law enforcement with the private sector to enhance the protection and dismantlement of criminal groups of human trafficking and migrant smuggling around the world by identifying new methods and types for exploration, trends and threats. At the INTERPOL Conference, A21 shared its role and best practices in this successful operation, and highlighted the significance of collaboration between law enforcement and civil society.



AFTERCARE

A21's Aftercare Program empowers survivors of human trafficking through the provision of holistic aftercare at each stage of their progression from crisis intervention to stability, restoration, and independence, according to their individual needs. In 2023, 110 new survivors entered the Aftercare Program, a 104% increase from 2022. The dramatic increase is attributed to the increased number of callers reporting suspicious activity to the A21-operated 1109 Hotline and subsequent police investigations leading to increased arrests of traffickers and recoveries of victims. A shift in the demographics of new survivors in the Aftercare Program was observed in 2023, with a high influx of survivors from Latin America (41.8%), a significant change from previous years. The percentage of survivors assisted in 2023 from African countries (41.8%) followed past patterns; however, there was a notable decrease in European survivors (15.5% in 2023 vs 25.9% in 2022) and Asian survivors (1% in 2023 vs 18.5% in 2022).

RELOCATION

Greece is considered both a transit and a destination country. In recent years, A21 observed many victims trafficked in third countries fleeing to Greece seeking safety after escaping their traffickers. A21 welcomed survivors from 23 countries into the Aftercare Program in 2023. While some survivors chose to remain in Greece and become independent, others returned to their home country. In 2023, A21 supported 34 international repatriations from Greece to Romania, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Brazil and Colombia. Additionally, 11 survivors received domestic relocation services. Before relocating survivors, A21 conducts a risk assessment and safety planning session. Survivors are then connected with local partners, where available, in their final destination to access aftercare services.

ACCOMMODATION

In 2023, A21 provided 72 survivors with accommodation support services. Of those, 42 survivors received short-term emergency accommodation, allowing them to safely transition into their subsequent stages after initially being identified as victims of trafficking. The A21 Home, an emergency shelter that enables survivors to rest, stabilise and strategise their path toward restoration, hosted 29 survivors. Thirteen survivors in 2023 were assisted by A21's long-term accommodation program, which offers survivors either rent assistance or accommodation in an A21 Apartment. The provision of long-term accommodation allows survivors to focus on establishing health and wellness and pursuing education and employment pathways that help them work towards establishing long-term freedom and independence without the financial stress of rent.

HOLISTIC SUPPORT PROVIDED IN THE A21 FREEDOM CENTRE AND REMOTELY

In 2023, A21 assisted 156 survivors with aftercare services, an 84% increase from 2022. The A21 Aftercare Program utilises a community model of service provision that assists survivors in reintegrating safely and independently back into their community through accessing local services. A21's Freedom Centre, a drop-in day centre that provides survivors of human trafficking a safe place to meet with their caseworker, build community with other survivors and access A21 aftercare services, is central to this model. In 2023, 43 survivors attended the Freedom Centre, many of whom engaged in Greek language lessons, job searches, creative activities and survivor celebrations. A21's Aftercare Program also provided survivors with medical and dental treatment, psychological consultations, legal assistance and financial support. In 2023, survivors completed a total of 70 Life Programs, with survivors completing from one to four different programs in the year, benefitting from developing practical life skills, building self-esteem and confidence, strengthening relationships with other survivors, completing job readiness training and being equipped with strategies to manage the impact of trauma.

Regardless of whether a survivor requests crisis accommodation post-recovery, remote support due to their location, or holistic aftercare support within the community model, A21 supports each survivor until they are ready to transition out of the Aftercare Program or graduate into full independence. In 2023, 69% of survivors received in-person support (including crisis intervention and/or holistic aftercare provided at the Freedom Centre), and 31% received remote support. Remote support enables A21 to extend services to survivors nationwide, including those in refugee camps, and to continue supporting relocated survivors away from Thessaloniki by offering online meetings with aftercare staff (devices and data

provided when needed), case management support, as well as care packs sent monthly for practical support with groceries, toiletries and key seasonal needs.





LIFE-CHANGING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

A21 provides survivors with essential medical check-ups and when needed, additional medical support through partner organisations. In 2023, A21 provided medical or dental support to 43 survivors. In one case, a trafficker had severely injured a survivor in A21's Aftercare Program during one of her attempts to escape, to the point where she couldn't walk independently. A21 connected with multiple hospitals and doctors to secure the necessary operation for the survivor. The survivor is now recovering and has begun walking by herself, pain-free.

A male survivor supported by A21 also faced a significant challenge from a severe foot injury during an attack in his home country, leaving his foot damaged for years. His disability limited his employment opportunities, thereby increasing his vulnerability of being trafficked. His acceptance of the employment, which ultimately led to his trafficking situation, was partly due to his limited employment opportunities. Moreover, his disability contributed to his inability to escape sooner and hindered his restorative process as he sought safe employment in Greece. A top medical clinic, and key A21 partner for multiple years, generously offered to perform the necessary surgery free of charge. A month after the surgery, with A21's daily visits and support, the survivor regained his ability to wear shoes and walk without pain.

SURVIVORS GRADUATE THE AFTERCARE PROGRAM

In 2023, eight survivors graduated from the A21 Aftercare Program, demonstrating signs of independence and stability, such as positively engaging with the local community, being financially independent, staying safe and demonstrating empowered attitudes and behaviours. One survivor on her graduation day proudly proclaimed, 'Today I can speak, make decisions, and be free because of you. You helped me make my dreams come true.'



SURVIVORS REPORT STABILITY AND LOW VULNERABILITY AFTER RECEIVING AFTERCARE

The Assessment of Survivor Outcomes (ASO)[7] tool assesses the progress survivors of human trafficking make toward restoration in key areas of functioning, including safety, legal protection, mental well-being, economic empowerment and education, social support and physical well-being. Caseworkers complete the ASO at survivor intake, case closure and 12-month follow-up. Since 2019, A21 has applied the ASO to all survivors receiving assistance beyond crisis intervention.

In 2023, A21 closed 41 cases that had received ongoing assistance. Upon case closure, A21 assessed 80% of those survivors (33 out of 41) to be stable or highly stable with low vulnerability to re-victimisation. Furthermore, follow-ups of survivors 12 months after case closure from 2020 to 2023 revealed that 89% of the survivors remained stable with low vulnerability to re-victimisation.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

A21's Legal Assistance Program provides survivors with attorneys for criminal and civil proceedings, and aftercare services designed specifically to support survivors' legal proceedings. In 2023, A21 provided direct legal services to 63 survivors through the A21 Legal Assistance Program.

Often survivors at the entry point into A21's Aftercare Program have been designated as victims and key witnesses, in the criminal prosecution of their traffickers. Upon receiving consent from the survivor, A21 provides a victim's attorney to represent the survivor's interests in the criminal proceedings, including on appeal when warranted. Criminal prosecution in Greece often spans an average of five years from the initial arrest of the trafficker to the completion of the criminal trial, and any ensuing appeals. In 2023, A21 provided a victim's attorney to 30 trafficking survivors, where criminal proceedings and prosecution have been initiated, and survivors have authorised A21 lawyers to represent them in their criminal cases. In 2023, four criminal cases, three appeals and one trial, successfully concluded with either a conviction in the first instance or affirmation of the convictions on appeal.

One criminal trial was particularly significant as it had been initiated in 2016 and involved an allegation of forced labour. In that case, traffickers recruited victims from their home country of Romania with false promises of employment in Greece. These victims relied on this misrepresentation and travelled to Greece only to discover themselves trapped in agricultural trafficking on arrival. Traffickers confiscated their travel documents, restricted their movements and forced them to work in the citrus fruit fields without any wages. The victims were discovered as a result of coordination between local law enforcement, the anti-trafficking specialised law enforcement unit and the Romanian Embassy. They were then referred to A21 for assistance and legal representation for seven survivors in the criminal prosecution proceedings. After commencing in 2016, the criminal case concluded in 2023 when the court convicted the three perpetrators and sentenced them collectively to a total of 42 years in prison for the offence of trafficking in human beings. This particular case is of significance as being one of the few labour trafficking prosecutions. While historically Greece has focused on sex trafficking cases, A21 has observed an increase in the investigation and prosecution of labour trafficking cases, especially commencing in the latter part of 2023.

In addition to providing legal representation to victims at the trial level of the prosecution, A21's Legal Assistance Program also represents the victims on any appeal submitted by the defendants challenging their convictions. In 2023, A21 successfully represented the interests of female victims of sexual exploitation in three separate appellate cases, resulting in the final conviction and sentencing of the main defendants. Moreover, under the relevant Greek legislation, the conclusion of the criminal proceedings permits trafficking victims to initiate their claims for compensation before the civil courts.

ADVOCATING FOR VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Often victims may violate the law while being trafficked. A21 advocates for human trafficking victims' rights before national prosecuting authorities and governmental agencies by providing trafficking survivors with criminal defence attorneys in prosecutions against them. Such a case occurred in 2023 against a survivor in A21's Aftercare Program. In that case, the prosecutor had determined this female survivor to be a victim in a sex trafficking case being prosecuted. Despite this status as a trafficking victim, another prosecutor initiated criminal proceedings against that female survivor for violating the provisions governing legal prostitution. A21 immediately provided a criminal defence attorney for this survivor and submitted a legal position arguing for her protection against such prosecution under Greece's non-punishment principle implemented in human trafficking cases. A21's attorney also informed the NRM and the Greek Supreme Court's prosecutor of this troubling practice to raise awareness and prevent future occurrences.

CIVIL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND ASYLUM PROCEDURES

In addition to providing victims with legal representation in criminal matters, A21 provided direct legal consultation to 17 survivors in A21's Aftercare Program on matters related to their legal status in Greece, such as procuring necessary residence permits and travel documents. Furthermore, A21 provided legal services for survivors appearing before the asylum services and appeals authorities of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum for their refugee application.

A21 CONTRIBUTES IN ESTABLISHING NEW PRECEDENT FOR VICTIM IDENTIFICATIONS

A21 made significant progress in advocating for human trafficking rights under Greek law in 2023. Although Greek law recognises that human trafficking is a crime subject to prosecution, regardless of the criminal's nationality or the location of the crime,[8] public prosecutors rarely officially certify individuals as 'victims of trafficking' where the trafficking wholly occurred in another country with no nexus to Greece. In 2023, for the first time, A21 through its Legal Assistance Program filed motions, documents and expert opinions, to successfully petition the public prosecutor to obtain these certifications for three survivors in A21's Aftercare Program. As all three survivors had been trafficked in another country, criminal prosecution had not been initiated in Greece. Furthermore, as the offence occurred outside of Greek territory, the police could not be involved in this certification process.

These three cases, initiated by A21, and one other case filed by the IOM, are cases of first impression in Greece, as the only recorded instances of official identification of a survivor trafficked in a third country. As a result of this success, A21 intends to file similar motions for other survivors going forward, thus allowing survivors access to benefits and rights, such as access to medical and psychological support, the right to work and a residence permit.

1109

ΓΡΑΜΜΗ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΗΣΗΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ **ΕΜΠΟΡΙΑ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ**

TIP TO THE 1109 HOTLINE LEADS TO THE DISMANTLING OF A TRANSNATIONAL SEX TRAFFICKING SYNDICATE, THE RECOVERY OF VICTIMS AND PREVENTS THE TRAFFICKING OF TWO OTHERS

In response to a hotline tip provided to law enforcement by the 1109 Hotline, Greek law enforcement initiated a criminal investigation. This investigation culminated in a large-scale take-down of an international human trafficking syndicate in February 2023 by the Greek Anti-Trafficking Police Division, the Colombian National Police, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and INTERPOL. A21 was onsite to assist survivors.

A Latin American trafficking victim managed to escape from a hotel in Central Athens and sent a report to the 1109 Hotline providing crucial and detailed information regarding the trafficking ring's illegal activity and the victims' exploitation. The 1109 Hotline provided a detailed report to law enforcement, and a police investigation began. Several months later, in collaboration with the aforementioned authorities, the Anti-Trafficking Police Division raided the hotel and arrested eight perpetrators, among whom were the hotel owner, drivers of cars and call operators who worked at the call centre they used to book the appointments with the women. The operation resulted in the extraction of 15 women from the hotel. Their nationalities were Brazilian, Colombian, Venezuelan and Moroccan. A21 was invited to be at the police station to support the survivors while they testified and provided aftercare support to the victims until most of them were repatriated.

The dismantling of this large-scale human trafficking ring in the Greek escort service garnered significant media attention in both Greece and Colombia due to the active involvement of the Colombian National Police in the operation. Consequently, two Colombian women, who travelled to Greece in March 2023 intending to work as dancers, had seen the news in their country before travelling and could quickly discern the fraudulent nature of the job presented to them and identified the human trafficking red flags. They promptly contacted local law enforcement and were successfully extracted from the situation before commercial sexual exploitation occurred. Such joint efforts are crucial in addressing transnational crimes, demonstrating the importance of awareness and education in preventing human trafficking.

ENDNOTES

[1] European Commission. Greece. Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/eu-countries/greece_en

[2] International Labour Organization, Walk Free, & International Organization for Migration. (2022). Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. In www.walkfree.org. International Labour Organization, Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration

[3] Walk for Freedom is a day of 'global awareness and local action' in the fight against human trafficking, where individuals engage their community through local walk events to raise awareness about human trafficking in their cities and collectively result in a ripple effect around the world.

[4] The *Can You See Me?* campaign is A21's global campaign intended to equip the general public on recognising human trafficking and reporting suspected trafficking to the country's relevant hotline. The real life scenarios depicted through the *CYSM?* campaign attempt to bring awareness to the millions of men, women and children currently trapped in modern day slavery across the world. By partnering with law enforcement, governments, businesses and NGOs, the goal is to turn awareness into action.

[5] Art. 323A (G)P.C. - Or full form: Art. 323A of L. 4619/2019 (O.G.G. A' 95/11.06.2019) Notes: 1) (G)C.C. stands for Greek Civil Code and p.d. for presidential decree. - Art. 1958 C.C. entered into force with L. 3089/2002, O.G.G. A' 327/23.12.2002 that repealed earlier provisions.
2) (G)P.C. stands for the Greek Penal Code (or Criminal Code), Article 323A P.C. provides all forms of human trafficking and penalises the offence of human trafficking.

[6] Moskoff, H. (2022). Reply From Greece to the Questionnaire for the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties. In Council of Europe. Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/reply-from-greece-to-thequestionnaire-for-the-evaluation-of-the-imple/1680a59b5a

[7] International Justice Mission. (2018). Assessment of Survivor Outcomes Guidance Manual. https://www.ijm.org/aso

[8] Article 8 of the Greek Penal Code, Article 1 § 1 L. 4251/2014 of the Greek Migration Code and Article 10 (Identification of the Victims) of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings - CETS 197 (Warsaw, 16.V.2005)

© A21 USA, INC. 2024. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.