

## Turkey was walking on the road to the EU

The Turkish president said on Monday that Turkey was proceeding to the European Union (EU) in a determined way.



GUL

Turkey's President Abdullah Gul said Turkey was walking on the road to the EU not in a quick but in a determined way.

"We can be more hopeful in 2010," Gul told the private CNN Turk channel.

Gul said whether Turkey became a full member or not was a different issue. On Cyprus problem, Gul said the EU was a bit misusing the issue, but Turkey would first do what it had to do and complete all chapters and adopt all required laws.

"Turkey is having constructive, not destructive, relations with its environment," Gul also said. Gul said Turkey's relations with the United States were based on mutual respect, and Turkey was boosting its relations with Russia, Middle Eastern and other countries.

Also, Gul defined terrorism as the most important issue, and said he thought terrorism could no longer live in the region when developments in Iraq and Syria, the fact that the United States would withdraw from Iraq, the clear stance of the EU on terrorism were taken into consideration.

On the non-Muslim citizens living in Turkey, Gul said that he would never want those citizens to face problems or feel themselves weird in their own homeland.

"Therefore, we will deal with their problems," Gul said.

Gul said every one had to be hopeful about normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations in the first quarter of 2010, however he could not say anything definite because such issues were very sensitive issues.

"It is important to turn this region, the entire Caucasus into a region of stability and peace and a geography of cooperation," he said. Gul said Turkish state's vision was to turn the entire region into a stable one, and Turkey was helping countries solve their own problems.

(Source: news.az)

## Serbia arrests war crimes suspect

**BELGRADE (AP)** — Serbian police have arrested a war crimes suspect wanted for the killing of at least 19 civilians in eastern Bosnia and other atrocities of the 1992-95 war.

The war crimes prosecutor's office said Darko Jankovic was apprehended Sunday.

Spokesman Bruno Vekaric said Jankovic is "potentially linked to horrendous crimes," including the killing of Muslim civilians near the Bosnian town of Zvornik in 1992. He gave no other details.

The arrest illustrates government resolve to prosecute war criminals from the Balkan wars of the 1990s as it seeks European Union membership.

Serbia's EU bid also hinges on the arrest of Ratko Mladic, a wartime Bosnian Serb army commander wanted on genocide charges by a UN court.

# Modern day slavery in Mexico and the United States

Part 2, Read the first part on [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com)

## Victims in transit are vulnerable to traffickers

Mexico also acts as an intermediary location between the individual's country of origin and the nation where he or she will be enslaved. Statistics representing Mexico as a transit country for traffickers are particularly lacking, as many individuals enter Mexico illegally and only briefly pass through the country. According to the U.S. State Department, "victims from South America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Asia, are trafficked into Mexico for labor exploitation, or transit the country en route to the United States." The Human Trafficking Assessment Tool reports that, of the estimated 500,000 Central Americans that travel through Mexico hoping to reach the U.S., 20,000 to 50,000 of these immigrants fall victim to human traffickers. The overwhelming majority of these victims are trafficked to the U.S., and a small minority of individuals are trafficked into Canada.

## Unaccompanied immigrants captured and forced to work in Mexico

The U.S. State Department reports a new trend that immigrants from Central and South America, traveling towards the U.S., are captured and exploited in Mexico. Guatemalans, living in a country wrought by political instability, violence, and crime, are often desperate to improve their economic situations and provide for their families. Devastatingly, human traffickers play upon their victims' desperation. Luis C. de Baca observed that, "though (human traffickers) deal in misery, what they're pitching is hope: hope for a better life, hope for a better opportunity."

With such a hope of improving her opportunities, a young Guatemalan woman left home to travel through Mexico in search of the fabled "American Dream." On December 2nd, the Mexican newspaper El Universal related the story of Nancy, a young Guatemalan woman, who left her native Guatemala with her brother hoping to travel through Mexico and then into the United States. The pair boarded a northbound train secretly but members of a gang called Los Zetitas viciously attacked them. The group of armed men, known for participating in drug and human trafficking, is only one of many such organizations operating in Mexico along the migratory route. The men grabbed Nancy and threw her into a car that soon departed, leaving her frantic brother behind. Nancy spent the next two and a half months working in a brothel along the U.S.-Mexico border before she was able to contact her brother, who soon organized her rescue. According to the article, her story is shared by nearly 20,000 Central Americans currently forced to work throughout Mexico.

## Tackling the issue

However, in its annual report, the State Department also applauded Mexico's enactment of federal anti-trafficking laws that dole out six to twelve years of prison time to convicted traffickers. Nonetheless, they continued to be concerned that supportive legislation is not being implemented at the local level. To date, only twenty-two of the thirty-one Mexican states have ratified at least partial trafficking laws, but there have been no reports of any convictions at the local, state, or federal level this past year. "So far there have been no convictions, which is a very serious problem," said ABA ROLI Consultant Gretchen Kuhner. "But the law against trafficking in Mexico is very new, and more time is needed to evaluate its implementation." With Mexico's federalist system, it is the responsibility of the state to enact legislation and subsequently punish offenders. The lack of prosecutions demonstrates a fundamental disconnect between the intentions of the federal government and the actual implementation of these reforms.

Corruption prevents federal legislation, ratified to adhere to international standards, from being implemented at the local level. According to the Trafficking Report, "some officials

reportedly accepted or extorted bribes, falsified identity documents, discouraged trafficking victims from reporting their crimes." In response to his country's rampant corruption, Mexican President Felipe Calderon launched Operation Limpieza, a program intended to rid the government of crooked officials. The program resulted in dozens of arrests and was intended to demonstrate, especially to the U.S., Mexico's commitment to establishing a morally upright law enforcement and judicial system. The Mexican government must continue to exhibit such dedication if it hopes to truly clean up its act and prosecute these criminals.

Possibly the most flawed aspect of existing Mexico's legislation is that the victims themselves must bring charges against the offenders in order for the crime to be considered human trafficking. The obvious issue with this mandate is that the victims, who have been coerced and forced into servitude, are often far too traumatized and frightened to speak up against the traffickers. Victims often fear for the safety of their families as the traffickers, who are typically members of larger criminal networks, have the contacts necessary to avenge any criminal investigation that might result from the victims' testimonies. Furthermore, without a real assurance that Mexican law enforcement officers will prosecute these offenders, victims will unfortunately be tempted to maintain their silence.

## Protecting victims of trafficking

In addition to strengthening the existing legislation and ensuring that anti-trafficking laws are strictly enforced, the Mexican government must begin to seriously protect the victims of human trafficking. Last year, the government allotted a mere \$5.45 million to shelter victims of human trafficking in a variety of protection programs. The bulk of assistance provided for these victims has come from international organizations and national non-governmental organizations. Of more concern is that Mexican victims are typically directed to contact local resources, which are often lacking, and foreign victims are often deported within 90 days. These individuals are returned to their homes without regard for the potential economic or political difficulties that await them. Furthermore, given the far reach of these criminal organizations, deporting victims makes them available and vulnerable once again to trafficking.

## Preventing human trafficking

The most important measure that must be taken to eliminate human trafficking is to work for the alleviation of poverty. Economic instability forces individuals, desperate to provide for their families, to seek employment opportunities in developed countries. According to the Associated Press, in Mexico from 2006 to 2008, people suffering from extreme poverty, or those surviving on less than \$1.25 a day, rose from 13.8 million to 19.5 million citizens. Ordinary poverty, or those who cannot pay for housing, transportation, and education, increased from 42.6 million to 50.6 million people over the same time period. Poverty also weakens social infrastructure and generates "zones of impunity" where traffickers can operate freely. Alleviating poverty empowers potential victims and prevents them from falling prey to the false promises of traffickers. In addition, countries must not only address human trafficking but also work to eliminate all forms of criminal activities within their borders. Educating citizens, in developed and developing countries alike, about human trafficking is the first step to reducing misunderstandings about the illegal industry and empowering victims to advocate on their own behalf.

The traffickers play upon an individuals' lack of awareness and social inequality to lure victims away from their homes and into a rapacious vocation. As a result, the individual does not understand that rather than gaining a steady job in the United States, he or she will be forced into prostitution or to labor on a farm. Supplying citizens with

knowledge about trafficking affords them the ability to advocate on behalf of the exploited. The State Department reports that FEVIMTRA, the Mexican Attorney General's Crimes Against Women and Trafficking in Persons Unit, began an educational campaign and distributed anti-trafficking material throughout the country. While this is a positive initiative, the State Department reported an "uneven" relationship between law enforcement and local NGOs, in that the work of the latter far exceeds the attention of the former to the subject. The Mexican government must endeavor to bridge this communication gaps between local and international organizations and law enforcement personnel.

Human trafficking takes advantage of and perpetuates economic and gender inequality. This illicit industry relies upon economic disparities to uproot impoverished individuals and transport them to areas where there is a consumer base for these services. The victims, who then do not have any opportunity to earn an income, cannot improve their economic situations or those of their families. In addition, many victims, due to emotional and physical trauma or social stigma, are barred from seeking gainful employment once liberated, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Preventing human trafficking requires eliminating the gender and economic inequality that the industry relies upon to function.

## Future steps to be taken

Collaboration between U.S. and Mexican authorities regarding the elimination of corruption and improving informational technology will help eliminate the prevalence of this malevolent industry. The most important step for both the U.S. and Mexico is to communicate and collaborate on issues involved with human trafficking. The industry thrives on so-called "zones of impunity," or areas where traffickers can operate without fear of prosecution, and the elimination of such areas through international collaboration is crucial to effectively combat trafficking.

Another important process involves the eradication of corruption in both the U.S. and Mexico to ensure that perpetrators and "turned" police personnel are brought to justice. Victims will only begin to have faith in law enforcement and the justice system once they witness the convictions of offenders. Until these criminals are brought to justice, victims will continue to live in fear, both of their captors and of law enforcement. Finally, empowering Mexican civil society through improvements in technology is necessary for equipping citizens and victims with the tools to report these crimes. For example, implementing a national hotline and informative websites enables victims to cite instances of trafficking and locations where they can be found. The Mexican government must work to not only develop these technologies but also make them accessible throughout the country, which could be aided by skillfully applied funding.

## Concluding remarks

No country is immune to human trafficking. All nations, whether they are classified as source, transit, or destination countries, are being profoundly damaged by this illicit and demoralizing industry. While the United Nations regards the Asia Pacific region as the "most vulnerable" to human trafficking, the presence of trafficking in Latin America is growing. The current economic downturn's effect on the region will undoubtedly lead to an increase in human trafficking throughout Latin America. The region must work together with the United States, which represents the largest destination country in the hemisphere, to ensure that countries are doing as much as possible to eradicate modern day slavery. While it is not easy for either the U.S. or Mexico to acknowledge the weight of the issue, both countries will, in fact, be key players in the fight against human trafficking.

(Source: Council on Hemispheric Affairs) (Concluded)



## U.S. embassy in Yemen reopens as security concerns ease

**SANAA (AFP)** — The U.S. mission in Yemen reopened Tuesday following a two-day closure as security fears prompted by Al-Qaeda threats against Western targets in the impoverished country eased, the embassy said.

The embassy said on its website that Yemeni security forces had addressed a "specific area of concern" in the north of the capital on Monday, paving the way for Tuesday's reopening.

Warnings of a possible Al-Qaeda attack had led Washington to close its embassy in the Yemeni capital on Sunday. The British and French authorities followed suit, while Japan suspended



Yemeni soldiers stand guard on a road leading to the U.S. embassy in Sanaa in 2008. (AFP/File/Khaled Fazaa)

consular services at its embassy.

There was no sign on Tuesday that the other missions had resumed normal operations.

"Successful counter-terrorism operations conducted by the government of Yemen security forces January 4 north of the capital have addressed a specific area of concern, and have contributed to the embassy's decision to resume operations," it said.

The statement appeared also to refer to a security operation conducted by Yemeni police Monday in the area of Arhab, 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Sanaa, where two suspected members of Al-Qaeda were killed and three others wounded.

"The United States commends the government of Yemen for its efforts to disrupt Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) networks, and reiterates its commitment to continue to support these efforts," it added.

The statement was referring to Al-Qaeda's franchise in Yemen which claimed responsibility for the failed attack on a U.S. airliner on Christmas Day, and urged attacks on Western interests in the country.

The Yemen interior ministry said Tuesday that all foreign missions and interests were "safe" pointing out that it has reinforced security measures around embassies and residents of foreigners.

The ministry also said that is arrested five "terrorist elements" over the past two days near the capital, but gave no details.

The culprit of the botched attack on the Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, has reportedly confessed to being trained by an Al-Qaeda bombmaker in Yemen for his suicide mission.

U.S. President Barack Obama has revealed that Abdulmutallab spent time in Yemen during the summer where he was allegedly in contact with AQAP.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had on Monday said Washington would reopen its mission in Yemen "when the conditions permit."

"The instability in Yemen is a threat to regional stability and even global stability," Clinton told reporters in Washington following talks with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jabr al-Thani.

"And certainly, we know that this is a difficult set of challenges, but they have to be addressed," Clinton said.

Speaking on a visit to Qatar, Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Kurbi said on Monday that his country needed help to take on the militants who have found the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country a fertile ground for recruitment.

"Certainly there is a problem with Al-Qaeda and an interest among the international community in its activities," Kurbi said.

"Yemen is capable of confronting these groups, but it needs international aid to form and train anti-terrorist units as well as economic aid, since the problem also has an economic dimension."

Obama's counter-terrorism adviser John Brennan said on Sunday that Washington was making a "determined and concerted effort" to help fund Yemen's special Counter-Terrorism Unit.

At the same time, U.S. officials said Yemen was one of 14 "terror linked" countries to which enhanced airline passenger screening would be applied.

The new designation means that all passengers flying into the United States from the countries will be subject to measures such as body pat-downs and searches of their hand luggage.