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Afghan Think-Tank Study Says Human Trafficking Law Requires More Attention

5 March 2018, Kabul: A recent study conducted by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) recommends that the trafficking law of 2017 should be reviewed to identify and remove all contradictory statements or redundancies with the penal code.

“Once they are aligned, it would allow for clearer and better implementation of policies to curbing human trafficking, smuggling of migrants and abduction cases,” [the AREU study recommends](#).

The mapping study of the Institutional Mechanism to Track Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan took place in the western Afghan province of Herat, the eastern province of Nangarhar and Kabul during 2015 and 2016 and was conducted by AREU and funded by the Security Governance Group (SGG). The AREU team has released a policy note funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), AREU’s core funding partner that provides updates and developments to the original report.

“The recommendations made by the AREU study deserves serious attention. The government of Afghanistan and its national and international counterparts involved in counter trafficking in persons efforts have an obligation to implement them to the best of their abilities to overcome this nefarious problem that has affected thousands of families in the country,” said Dr. Orzala Nemat, AREU Director.

Nemat said that despite the fact that significant progress has been made in the past several years to tackle human trafficking in the country, there are still a number of challenges that need to be addressed. The inclusion of criminal aspects of the anti-trafficking law in the penal code is a good step. However, urgent clarity is required in ensuring the prevention of trafficking in persons and protection of victims of trafficking.

The government of Afghanistan, with the financial and technical support of donors including the United States Department of State, has managed to address some important aspects of human trafficking in Afghanistan. As a result of these efforts, anti-trafficking laws have been developed and a High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Trafficking in Persons has been created. Furthermore, the victims of human trafficking have been provided with support while Afghan law enforcement and judicial officials have received training.



PRESS RELEASE

Despite all these achievements, a number of succinct measures could be implemented to enhance law enforcement capacity to address the human trafficking challenges such as increasing the size of the anti-trafficking unit in the Crime Investigative Department and establishing standard training curriculum for specialized, senior and tank-and file officers.

Meanwhile, the High Commission functions under the supervision of the Minister of Justice and includes 9 ministries and seven independent government and non-governmental institutions. Nonetheless, the findings of the study reveals that not all members of the High Commission participate regularly in the technical meetings held each month and the High Commission lacks female representation.

Ensuring better coordination among the relevant authorities and making effective policies to support quick and efficient responses need to be among the main objectives of the Afghanistan High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Trafficking in Persons and such objectives need to be operationalized.

The study further recommends that the policy enforcement powers of the Afghan government must be increased to sustain its operations by strengthening the High Commission, which requires more robust capacity to coordinate key stakeholders and disseminate information.

AREU is an independent research institute based in Kabul that was established in 2002 by the assistance of the international community in Afghanistan. AREU's mission is to inform and influence policy and practice by conducting high-quality, policy-relevant, evidence-based research and actively disseminating the results and promote a culture of research and learning.

AREU achieves its mission by engaging with policy makers, civil society, researchers and academics to promote their use of AREU's research-based publications and its library, strengthening their research capacity and creating opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate. AREU is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of representatives of donor organizations, embassies, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, Afghan civil society and independent experts.

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