



For immediate release

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Ruhama looks forward to new legislation that will identify and support more victims of human trafficking

Ruhama looks forward to the enactment of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking Bill) 2023 that reached its final stage in the Seanad today.

The legislation will be instrumental in tackling domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and supporting and protecting victims of crime. In addition to amendments to laws around rape and other sexual offences, it offers human trafficking-specific assistance and supports, the most significant of which is the reform of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

With the reformed NRM, rather than being the sole remit of An Garda Síochána, potential victims of trafficking will now be identified by competent authorities i.e. other State agencies and specialist NGOs designated as 'Trusted Partners'. It is envisioned that this will result in increased referrals thus enabling more victims to access legal advice, accommodation and specialist supports. The Act will aim to present a more representative picture of the numbers of people trafficked, their routes into trafficking, and lead to the identification and prosecution of those responsible.

It comes a week after the latest Trafficking in Persons report 2024 released from the US Department of State in which [Ireland is ranked Tier 2](#) meaning we do not fully meet minimum standards, but we are making significant progress.

Barbara Condon, CEO of Ruhama, said: 'As a frontline organisation that works with victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, Ruhama is acutely aware of the horrific impact of this heinous crime and the life-long trauma that it causes. The removal of the necessity for victims to present themselves to An Garda Síochána (AGS) in order to be formally identified as victims of trafficking is most welcome. Many victims/survivors fear or distrust the police in their home countries resulting in a reluctance to report to AGS in Ireland. We trust that this new legislation will be properly resourced and fully implemented, and fundamentally the NRM will enable more victims of trafficking to live a life without fear and afford them the opportunities that they were denied whilst under the control of pimps and traffickers.'

ENDS

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Act 2023 is available to read [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

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About Ruhama

Ruhama is a National non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a registered charity, which works with people impacted by prostitution and sex trafficking. Ruhama offers free and confidential support services.

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