

UN rallies public support to end human trafficking with Blue Heart campaign



UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa launches the Blue Heart Campaign against human trafficking.

5 March 2009 – The United Nations has launched a new campaign, represented by a blue heart, aimed at raising awareness about the millions of victims of human trafficking and rallying support to combat this modern form of slavery.

“There is a lot of ignorance about modern slavery. There is also a lot of good will to fight it,” Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), said today as he [launched](#) the campaign in Vienna.

“The blue heart will raise awareness about a crime that shames us all. It shows solidarity with the victims,” he told those gathered in the Austrian capital for the Women’s World Awards.

According to a news release issued by UNODC, the blue heart represents “the sadness of trafficking victims, the cold-heartedness of the perpetrators and the commitment of the United Nations to fight this crime.”

As part of the campaign, UNODC is encouraging members of the public to change their Facebook profile picture to a blue heart, upload the blue heart to their web page, spread the word through Twitter and watch video about human trafficking on YouTube.

The campaign’s launch comes ahead of this year’s International Women’s Day (8 March), whose theme is “Women and Men United to End Violence against Women and Girls.”

Speaking to the Women’s World Congress, which took place yesterday in Vienna, Mr. Costa described human trafficking as “the worst kind of violence against women, made even more repulsive by the fact that people make money from it.”

While poverty makes people vulnerable to human trafficking, gender discrimination and sexism are also to blame. “Whether it’s burkas or bikinis, the humiliation of women as property or sex objects is an affront to human dignity. It creates a market for women and girls who are traded like commodities,” he said.

The UNODC chief called on everyone to join the campaign “in order to end enslavement, and achieve women’s equality.”

The [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) is launching a new campaign to fight human trafficking. The [Blue Heart Campaign](#) aims to raise awareness and bring people together against this crime that shames us all.

The Campaign’s symbol is represented by a Blue Heart. This awareness-raising symbol illustrates the sadness of those who are trafficked while reminding us of the cold-heartedness of those who buy, sell and traffic our fellow human beings. The use of the blue UN colour also demonstrates the commitment of the United Nations to combating this crime against human dignity.

We ask all UN staff committed to ending this crime to join us and change their Facebook profile photos and status messages, add a Blue Heart to your UN web sites and change your Twitter thumbnails to a Blue Heart. Details can be found at <http://www.unodc.org/blueheart>.

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

The campaign will be presented at the Women’s World Awards in Vienna on 5 March, where key personalities attending the Award show will support the cause and endorse the fight against this crime.