



Anti-Trafficking Network

TO: Denis McDonough, Chief of Staff to the President
CC: David Wade, Chief of Staff to Secretary Kerry;
Tina Tchen, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady
RE: Appointment of Ambassador-at-Large, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
DATE: November 10, 2014

Dear Secretary of State John Kerry, U.S. Department of State:

This letter is to **offer our support and urge you to appoint a sophisticated anti-trafficking advocate who supports a human rights-based and comprehensive approach as the next Ambassador-at-Large for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP Office).**

The [New York Anti-Trafficking Network \(NYATN\)](#) is a coalition of legal and social service organizations that provide services to, and advocate for the rights of, trafficking survivors. **Having served and advocated for over 1,000 survivors of human trafficking**, NYATN was the first network of service providers and policy advocates in New York State to promote the rights of survivors of human trafficking. We believe in the effectiveness of a human rights-based approach with a focus on prevention and on remedies for survivors. In addition to engaging in advocacy at the international, federal, state, and local levels, we work to stabilize survivors of trafficking, provide necessary legal and social services of the highest quality, and assist them in accessing available options to cooperate with law enforcement.

As advocates who regularly engage with stakeholders at all levels in the field of human trafficking, we are deeply invested in the President's choice for the next Ambassador-at-Large in the J/TIP Office. It is imperative the next Ambassador-at-Large continue the strong work of this current office, build on it, and make advances toward the eradication of human trafficking. The focus of this key position must be to maintain a comprehensive approach that looks closely at all forms of trafficking in persons.

We have been gratified by the J/TIP Office's commitment to human rights. Human rights represent both a set of values and a system of laws and enforcement mechanisms. It is crucial that the J/TIP Office embodies our shared values of dignity, fairness, and opportunity that are central in a just society and for empowering people.

Trafficking in persons clearly involves human rights concerns, based on the coercion, threats, or violence that victims and survivors face. But the responses to human trafficking also involve very important human rights issues. A response to trafficking in persons that is rooted in human rights respects the dignity and self-determination of the person who is thought to be a victim. This means creating an environment where the person at risk is able to make his or her own decisions about the steps he or she needs to take in addressing the situation. It also means doing the due diligence to investigate whether a situation involves coercion and trafficking, or not.

This administration and the J/TIP Office has been able to elevate the discourse of human trafficking to address the complex nature of this abuse and to keep focused on solutions rooted in the needs and rights of survivors. With the growth in awareness of human trafficking as a problem within the United States and throughout the world, interest in taking measures toward eliminating human trafficking has spread in the public and private sectors. Despite the groundswell of support for anti-trafficking efforts, there are growing challenges to promoting a survivor-centered, rights-based approach in policy and practice. We at the NY Anti-Trafficking Network hope to work with the new Ambassador-at Large to ensure that the current efforts of the Office are continued.