



REPUBLIC OF PALAU  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SURANGEL WHIPPS, JR.  
*President*

P.O. Box 6051, Palau, PW 96940  
Tel. (680) 767-2403/2828  
Fax. (680) 767-2424/1662  
Email: [president@palaupresident.info](mailto:president@palaupresident.info)

**PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 23-339**

*"Declaring the month of February as Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Month"*

**WHEREAS**, human trafficking is considered a modern form of slavery and takes many forms that involve exploitation of both adults and children for labor and sex; it tears apart communities, fuels criminal activity, and threatens national security; and

**WHEREAS**, effectively combating these crimes requires the steadfast prosecution of human traffickers, protection and support services for victims of human trafficking, and prevention education to raise awareness and help decrease the incidence of human trafficking; and

**WHEREAS**, the Republic of Palau reaffirms its commitment to protect the dignity and freedom of all people and to combat human trafficking domestically and globally; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2005, the Republic of Palau adopted the Anti-People Smuggling and Trafficking Act (17 PNCA Chapter 21) as a comprehensive and coordinated response to human trafficking crimes; and

**WHEREAS**, "human trafficking" or "people trafficking" is defined in Palau National Code Title 17 in Section 2102 as the "recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of a person for the purposes of exploitation;" and

**WHEREAS**, the offense of people trafficking as defined in 17 PNCA Section 2106 as "every person who knowingly or recklessly recruits, transports, harbors or receives any person or persons for the purpose of exploitation by threat, use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or the giving or receiving of payments/benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another;" and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, Executive Order 405 established a Special Presidential Task Force to develop the Republic of Palau Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, the Republic of Palau established an Anti-Human Trafficking Office through Executive Order 412 to coordinate national efforts to combat human trafficking and implement the Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan; and



**WHEREAS**, in 2019, the Republic of Palau became a state party to the United Nations Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Protocol that addresses all aspects of trafficking in persons and supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, the Ministry of Justice was reorganized through Executive Order 444, renaming the Anti-Human Trafficking Office to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit under the Division of Transnational Crime in the Bureau of Public Safety; and

**WHEREAS**, an Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group was established through a Memorandum of Understanding endorsed on January 20, 2022, to strengthen the Republic of Palau's coordinated response to combat human trafficking domestically; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Public Safety, through the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, published a revised Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan focused on a "4P Paradigm: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership" to guide the Republic of Palau's collective and coordinated response to combat human trafficking; and

**WHEREAS**, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit has developed robust standard operating procedures for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking and investigation of human trafficking cases, and has entered into a Memorandum of Understandings with appropriate Government Ministries in order to strengthen and streamline the interagency coordination and cooperation in their joint efforts to combat human trafficking and provide justice for its victims; and

**WHEREAS**, the Republic of Palau shall prioritize legislative and executive actions that would increase efforts to detect, investigate, prosecute, and convict human traffickers with adequate penalties that remove fines in lieu of prison time; and

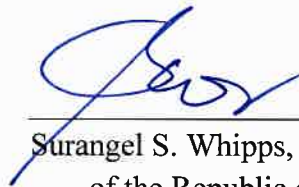
**WHEREAS**, all stakeholders should coordinate to meet the following objectives: (1) overcome information-sharing and reporting challenges; (2) enforce punishment of recruiters, employment agents, and labor officials for illegal practices that facilitate trafficking; (3) increase resources and develop victim protection and assistance through a comprehensive Crimes Victims Act that includes shelter options, interpretation services, medical and psychological care, and other rehabilitation support; (4) offer public education and awareness on human trafficking; and (5) make available to the public a list of resources to help identify and report instances as well as assist victims of human trafficking; and



**WHEREAS**, through these national efforts, let us resolve to advance equity and justice across our society, expand the rights and dignity of working people, and promote human rights for all people; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Surangel S. Whipps, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Palau, do hereby proclaim the month of February as Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Month and call upon everyone to recognize the vital role we play in combating human trafficking, and to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, training and community engagements aimed at preventing all forms of human trafficking.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand this 10<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023, in the Republic of Palau.

  
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Surangel S. Whipps, Jr. President  
of the Republic of Palau