

RENATE SUMMER NEWSLETTER

**FEATURING HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE RENATE NETWORK,
APRIL - JUNE 2025**

FROM POWERFUL **SCHOOL VISITS** TO
MOMENTS OF DEEP **SPIRITUAL
REFLECTION**, THIS EDITION OF THE
RENATE NEWSLETTER BRINGS YOU
HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR RECENT
WORK.

WE INVITE YOU TO READ, REFLECT,
AND STAND WITH US AS WE **STRIVE
TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING** IN ALL
ITS FORMS!

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CHILDREN PAGE 13



RELIGIOUS IN EUROPE NETWORKING
AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

REMEMBERING POPE FRANCIS, WELCOMING POPE LEO XIII



In this time of transition, we honour the memory and legacy of Pope Francis, whose leadership and compassion left an indelible mark on the world and on the mission of RENATE. His unwavering commitment to ending human trafficking, especially his bold denunciation of it as “a vile trade in human lives,” continues to guide our work.

As we welcome Pope Leo XIII, we pray for wisdom, courage, and renewal in leadership as the Church moves forward. We stand ready to walk in partnership with him, continuing the mission of mercy, justice, and solidarity with the most vulnerable.

A LOOK BACK: AN AUDIENCE WITH POPE FRANCIS DURING RENATE’S 2ND EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY, ROME 2016

The 2nd European Assembly of RENATE took place in Rome from 6th – 12th November 2016, gathering 130 members of RENATE from 27 countries. One of the Assembly’s many highlights, was a private audience with Pope Francis on 7th November at the Vatican.

Sr. Imelda Poole, IBVM, and RENATE President during that time, addressed Pope Francis, thanking him for his leadership and speaking of the RENATE network’s work in the fight against human trafficking. In response, Pope Francis commended RENATE’s mission and courage, especially in supporting survivors and raising awareness across Europe.

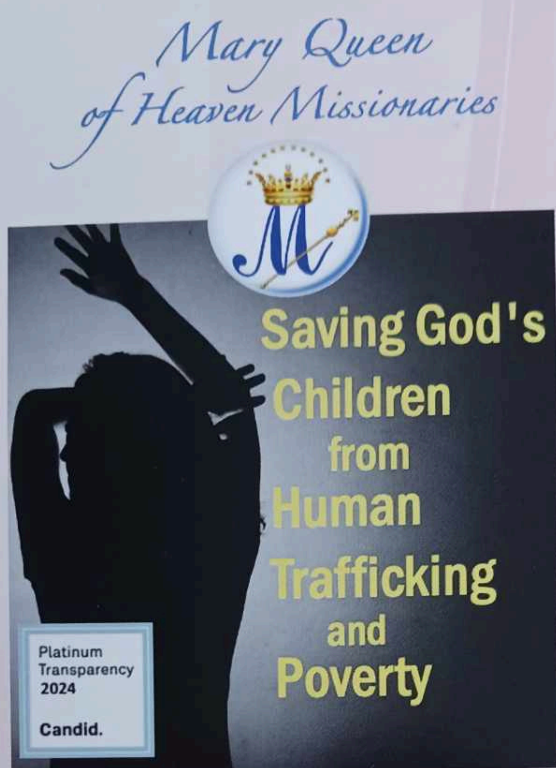
He encouraged RENATE to remain steadfast, even amid indifference and complicity driven by powerful economic interests.

He reminded us that *"as you well know, one of the challenges to this work... is a certain indifference and even complicity... where powerful economic interests and networks of crime are at play."*

Pope Francis then concluded by expressing his confidence that RENATE members would offer "a more effective witness to the Gospel in one of the great peripheries of society."

Read Pope Francis' address to RENATE [here](#).





Rescue

We rescue children & young women, ages 8 and older, from prostitution.

Education

We provide education assistance to survivors and also the rural poor of the Philippines.



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BUILDING INTERNATIONAL BONDS: NEWS FROM SOLWODI HUNGARY

On 16 June, SOLWODI Hungary welcomed two sisters from the Mary Queen of Heaven Missionaries (MQHM), an order founded in the Philippines in 1996 to combat human trafficking. Sr. Jeodalyn and her colleague met with Sr. Judit Knab (CJ) in Budapest to exchange experiences and insights.

The MQHM sisters have been visiting organisations across Europe to learn more about anti-trafficking efforts. They run safe houses and work with young women, mothers, and girls in both the Philippines and the United States, funding their mission largely through private donations and their own fundraising.

During the visit, Sr. Judit introduced MQHM to SOLWODI Hungary's ongoing projects, including the "Walk Her Home Club," launched in 2022, and shared about Talitha Kum. Both parties expressed hope for continued collaboration in the global fight against human trafficking.

SUMMER IN MALTA: UPDATES FROM DAR HOSEA

Summer in Malta brings high temperatures, so at Dar Hosea, beneficiaries are invited to enjoy pool days and beach outings as part of their holistic support. These days are enjoyed immensely by participants!



Additionally, staff at Dar Hosea are currently supporting service users who have recently entered prison, with continued participation in weekly arts and crafts sessions.

On 11 June, one of the team's social workers attended the international conference *"Empowering Change: Technology and Artificial Intelligence in the Fight Against Human Trafficking,"* held under the Maltese Presidency of the Council of Europe. This was a fundamental and inspiring event for the future of anti-trafficking work in Malta.

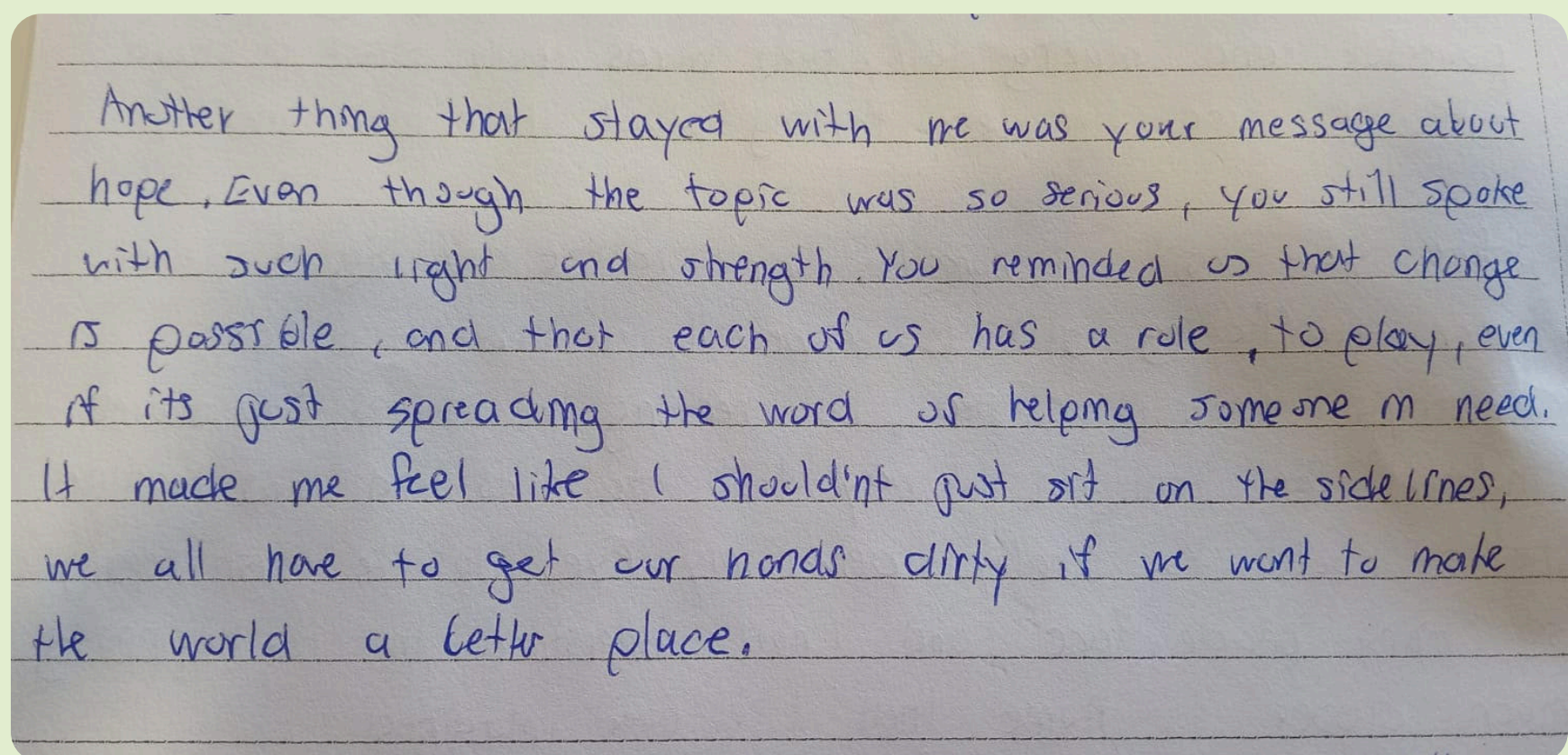
A VISIT THAT MOVED MANY: SR. IMELDA POOLE (IBVM) VISITS ALBANIAN COLLEGE TIRANA

Earlier this month, Sr. Imelda Poole (IBVM) visited a Grade 11 class at Albanian College Tirana, where she led an interactive session on human trafficking and exploitation. Sr. Imelda spoke candidly about the realities of trafficking across Europe, grounding her message in real-life examples and stories from RENATE's work.

She invited students to reflect on how easily vulnerable people can be drawn into exploitative situations, and encouraged the group to ask critical questions, stay informed, and look out for one another.

The students were deeply engaged, asking thoughtful questions and sharing their own observations. For many, this was their first in-depth exposure to the subject, and the session left a lasting impression. Several students later approached staff to express how much the talk had opened their eyes to the unseen risks facing young people today.

Sister Imelda's visit reflects RENATE's commitment to education and prevention through meaningful dialogue and personal connection. It's in classrooms like this, one group of students at a time, that the seeds of awareness, empathy, and action are sown.

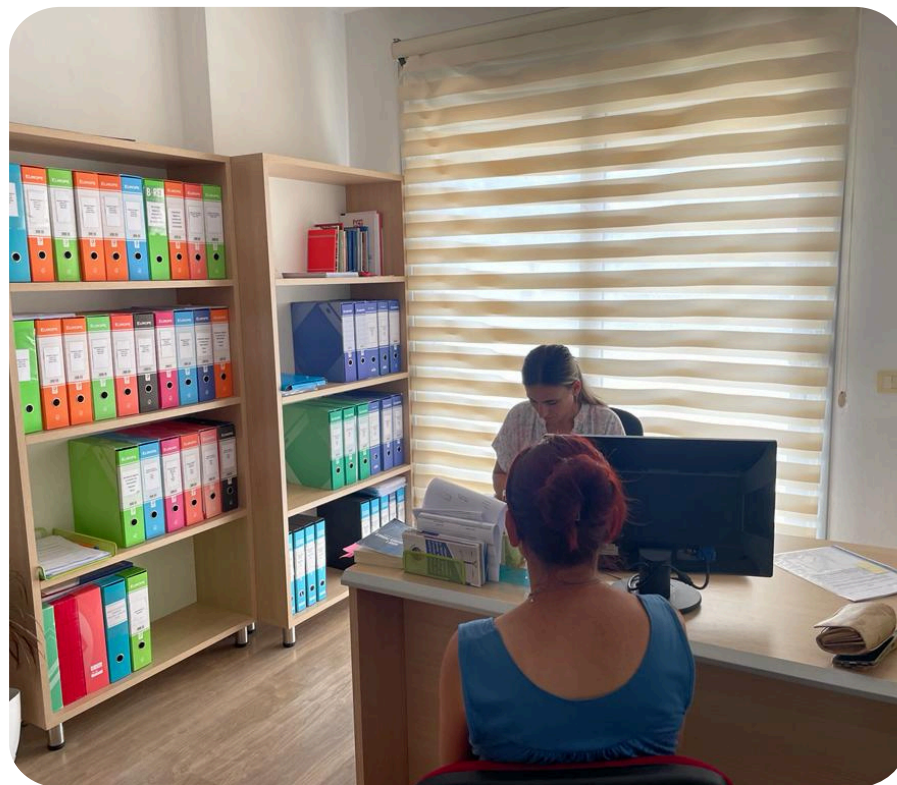


LEADING WITH CARE: NEWS FROM “VATRA” PSYCHO SOCIAL CENTER, ALBANIA

“Vatra” Psycho Social Center, a RENATE network member based in Albania, has been protecting and empowering survivors of trafficking and violence since 1999. With mobile units active in five regions and a dedicated multidisciplinary team, Vatra offers residential and community services tailored to survivors' needs.

Recent Highlights:

- **Prevention & Education:** In recent months, Vatra ran awareness sessions across multiple Albanian cities, reaching nearly 500 students. These efforts focused on identifying new forms of trafficking and empowering youth to stay informed and safe.



- **Direct Assistance:** In 2025 alone, 43 trafficking victims have been referred for services. Notably, 16 were foreign nationals, showing Albania's increasing role as a destination for trafficking.
- **Legal Advocacy:** Vatra continues to publish legal and policy research, such as its recent judicial analysis and case studies, to improve victim rights and influence sentencing practices in Albania.
- **Professional Training:** Vatra conducts regular workshops for frontline workers, including police, prosecutors, health workers, and educators.

Learn more about their vital contributions by clicking the links below!

[Legal Analysis Report](#)

[Case Study Report](#)

[Study on Access and Quality of Services](#)

ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF APT IRELAND, MEMBERS MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS, 24-26 MAY 2025.

Reflecting on the wonderful experience of our APT (Act to Prevent Trafficking) retreat at Notre Dame de Paris in May 2025, recalls all the previous APT travels...

So many times to Den Bosch in The Netherlands ('07-'09), as we worked with colleagues from France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Germany and UK for two years, up to the foundation of RENATE on 25th March 2009. Then in September of that year, so many of us travelled to

Trzebinia in Poland, where we were joined by religious from countries in Central and Eastern Europe who were working in prevention against trafficking or supporting survivors. We were 77 in all, where we extended the membership of RENATE to many religious and their lay helpers, and where RENATE became acknowledged as an agency under the auspices of UISG.

In 2016 we travelled to Rome for the RENATE Assembly there and in 2022 to Fatima for the RENATE Network's second Assembly. After 20 years of working to combat human trafficking, Notre Dame de Paris called us at APT to pilgrimage to the Cathedral in 2025, this year when its restoration has been officially completed.

It has been a memorable pilgrimage, to pray, to be together, to share some free time, chat, have fun, relax and give thanks – for all that has been, “thanks” to all that will be, “yes”





CARITAS UKRAINE SUPPORTS VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The human trafficking crisis in Ukraine remains critical. Since the full-scale invasion began, internal trafficking has surged. Between 2022 and 2024, 347 individuals were officially identified as victims. In 2024 alone, 182 cases were documented. The first quarter of 2025 has already seen 56 new trafficking cases and 39 instances of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

Over 70% of victims experienced multiple forms of exploitation, including sexual violence, forced labour, domestic servitude, and coercion into the conflict. Child trafficking is also on the rise – Caritas Ukraine reports that approximately 10% of identified survivors are children.

Survivor Story: Andriy, Age 17

Andriy (name changed) lived with his mother in Kherson during the Russian occupation. For over six months, they were subjected to repeated threats and psychological pressure by soldiers who visited their home twice weekly. Both were locked in separate rooms and endured repeated sexual violence.

Eventually, Andriy escaped through an evacuation convoy after his mother insisted he leave to continue his studies. She stayed behind so he could reach safety. After reaching his grandmother in Ternopil and receiving IDP status, Caritas Ukraine identified him as a survivor of trafficking.

Today, Andriy lives with his grandparents and is attending school. Caritas provides him with psychological and legal support, school materials, household items, and help preparing for university entrance exams. Though he misses his mother, he is now on a path toward healing and education.



APT IRELAND (ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING) CONTINUES AWARENESS RAISING EFFORTS IN SCHOOLS

APT recently collaborated with An Garda Síochána in an awareness-raising event at Holy Child School, Killiney. Thanks to teacher Ms. Moisselle and all the students who took part in the cAPTives anti-human trafficking programme, which is freely available to post-primary schools in Ireland.

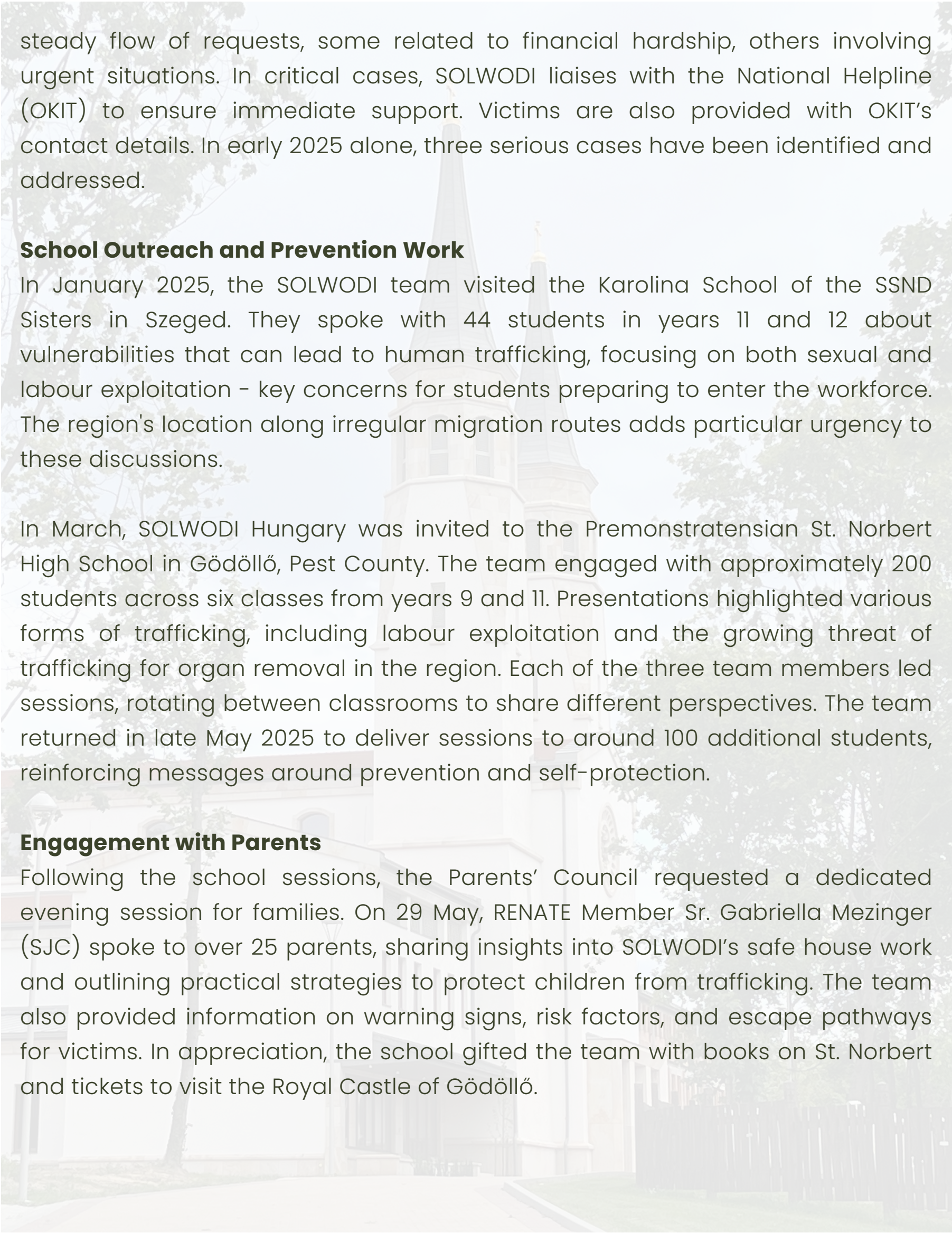
Detective Sergeant Michelle Carey gave a powerful presentation as part of our shared efforts to raise awareness about human trafficking in Ireland.

SOLWODI HUNGARY: A YEAR OF OUTREACH AND IMPACT

Over the past year, SOLWODI Hungary has been actively engaged in prevention work, direct support for survivors, and community education.

New Website and Case Support:

Since August 2024, SOLWODI Hungary has operated a new website featuring a contact form for those in need. Through this channel, the team has received a



steady flow of requests, some related to financial hardship, others involving urgent situations. In critical cases, SOLWODI liaises with the National Helpline (OKIT) to ensure immediate support. Victims are also provided with OKIT's contact details. In early 2025 alone, three serious cases have been identified and addressed.

School Outreach and Prevention Work

In January 2025, the SOLWODI team visited the Karolina School of the SSND Sisters in Szeged. They spoke with 44 students in years 11 and 12 about vulnerabilities that can lead to human trafficking, focusing on both sexual and labour exploitation – key concerns for students preparing to enter the workforce. The region's location along irregular migration routes adds particular urgency to these discussions.

In March, SOLWODI Hungary was invited to the Premonstratensian St. Norbert High School in Gödöllő, Pest County. The team engaged with approximately 200 students across six classes from years 9 and 11. Presentations highlighted various forms of trafficking, including labour exploitation and the growing threat of trafficking for organ removal in the region. Each of the three team members led sessions, rotating between classrooms to share different perspectives. The team returned in late May 2025 to deliver sessions to around 100 additional students, reinforcing messages around prevention and self-protection.

Engagement with Parents

Following the school sessions, the Parents' Council requested a dedicated evening session for families. On 29 May, RENATE Member Sr. Gabriella Mezinger (SJC) spoke to over 25 parents, sharing insights into SOLWODI's safe house work and outlining practical strategies to protect children from trafficking. The team also provided information on warning signs, risk factors, and escape pathways for victims. In appreciation, the school gifted the team with books on St. Norbert and tickets to visit the Royal Castle of Gödöllő.

Upcoming Events:

On 30 July 2025, SOLWODI Hungary will mark the UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons with a special mass. As in previous years, the event will focus particularly on labour exploitation, an issue that becomes especially relevant during the summer months, when seasonal work can increase vulnerability to trafficking.

CARITAS SLOVAKIA EMBARK ON PILGRIMAGE TO HONOUR ST. BAKHITA

In April, the Caritas Slovakia Stop Human Trafficking project team embarked on a moving pilgrimage to Italy, visiting the Canossian Monastery in Schio where St. Bakhita lived and served. The Canossian Sisters welcomed them warmly, sharing stories of St. Bakhita's life and legacy as a symbol of hope and resilience. The visit concluded with a powerful viewing of the sculpture Release of the Oppressed, capturing the spirit of St. Bakhita's mission.

After the unexpected passing of Pope Francis, the group extended their journey to Rome to honour his immense contribution to the fight against human trafficking. They visited his resting place at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and passed through the Holy Door as part of the Jubilee Year. This pilgrimage deeply inspired the team and strengthened their commitment to supporting those most in need.





CARITAS UKRAINE ADVOCATES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

Natalia Holynska, RENATE member and Project Manager of Caritas Ukraine, participated in the Regional Expert Group Meeting in Bucharest on April 23–24 2025. The conference focused on the Impact of the War in Ukraine on Human Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe, with a particular emphasis on illegal adoption and surrogacy exploitation.

Natalia presented the powerful documentary made in collaboration with RENATE, entitled "*Fragile Life*", which tells real stories of trafficking during wartime, including the case of a boy trafficked for forced adoption. You can watch the film [here](#).

She shared several recommendations: improving international referral mechanisms to include non-EU countries like Ukraine; commissioning updated research studies focusing on trafficking in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, and Poland; and raising awareness about surrogacy exploitation. She also emphasized the need for better identification and support of trafficking victims in all forms — sexual, labour, domestic servitude, and more — and urged that emerging global challenges such as AI, climate change, and conflict be addressed through potential updates to the Palermo Protocol.

Natalia concluded her address by expressing hope that these proposals will help strengthen global anti-trafficking efforts.

APT IRELAND (ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING) JOINS GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION FOR TRAFFICKED UKRAINIAN CHILDREN, DUBLIN

On 1 June 2025, members of APT Ireland (Act to Prevent Trafficking) gathered in Dublin in solidarity with others around the world to raise urgent awareness about the thousands of children and young people from Ukraine who have been trafficked to Russia during the ongoing war.

Many of these children have been forcibly displaced, militarised, or absorbed into Russia's war efforts, in violation of international law. Their removal has left tens of thousands of Ukrainian families devastated and a generation of young people uprooted, exploited, and denied their future.

APT Ireland and RENATE stands with all those calling for justice, protection, and safe return for Ukraine's most vulnerable – its children.





RENATE MEMBERS' RETREAT IN VIENNA, JUNE 2025

This June, RENATE members gathered at Kardinal König Haus in Vienna for a spiritual retreat led by Fr. Ray Pace, SJ. The retreat offered a welcome space for rest, renewal, and deep reflection in the midst of our shared mission.

As an example of the retreat's rhythm, the first day focused on Revelation 12, inviting participants to reflect on the spiritual battles faced in anti-trafficking work — the struggle to remain faithful, to seek healing, and to forgive in the face of great harm. Through scripture, prayer, and silence, members held both survivors and perpetrators in their hearts, grounding their mission in compassion and truth.

The retreat provided meaningful spiritual nourishment, helping many reconnect with their calling and return to their work renewed and strengthened.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND NEWSLETTERS

- [STOP Trafficking April Newsletter.](#)
- [STOP Trafficking May Newsletter.](#)
- [STOP Trafficking June Newsletter](#)
- [Lutte contre la traite des êtres humains Newsletters;](#)
[Jan - April 2025](#)
- [Resources and Recordings from RENATE's Input at](#)
[CSW69](#)
- [Series of RENATE Short Films](#)

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