



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

NOV 24 2015

The Honorable  
Chuck Grassley, Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your September 17 letter regarding issues related to trafficking in persons. Your letter raised many important issues regarding human trafficking, which I will try to address. Throughout the world, it is estimated that more than 20 million individuals are trapped in compelled service – against their will, unable to provide for their families, and subject to unspeakable abuses. Ending human trafficking is a priority for this Administration as well as for Congress. It is the responsibility of the U.S. government, including every American embassy, to work to confront this issue, and it is core to our foreign policy.

First, you raised the Office of Inspector General (OIG) report dated September 2015 (*Management Assistance Report: Action Still Needed To Update the Department's Standards of Conduct as They Relate to Trafficking in Persons and To Comply With a Related Recommendation*) and the prevention of human trafficking by diplomatic personnel overseas. The Department is committed to strengthening protections for domestic workers everywhere, including those employed by State Department personnel.

The State Department is taking proactive steps to ensure the Department holds itself to the highest standards. We take the OIG's recommendations very seriously. As a result of the OIG's 2015 Management Assistance Report, the Department reinvigorated its efforts. In addition to its human trafficking awareness training for all employees, the Department is in final stages of finalizing measures to address the outstanding recommendations made by the OIG in AUD/IP-12-02, namely (i) updating the Department's Standards of Conduct in the Foreign Affairs Manual as they relate to trafficking in persons (*AUD/IP-12-02 Recommendation 2*), and (ii) including in the Foreign Affairs Manual the U.S. policy regarding

trafficking in persons, including the definition and information on prohibited acts by Department personnel and contractors, reporting mechanisms, and associated penalties. (*AUD/IP-12-02 Recommendation 1*).

The Department continues to take consistent steps to promote awareness of human trafficking within the Department. For example, beginning in April 2010, the Department sent a cable to all USG personnel under Chief of Mission authority about the proper treatment of domestic staff under their employ. This message emphasized that all Department employees, dependents, and members of households overseas must adhere to the same standards of treatment and fairness expected of foreign diplomats assigned to the United States. The cable noted that this was especially important in cases in which USG personnel sponsor non-host country nationals to work as domestic staff. This same message also highlighted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's 2008 mandate to address the specific issue of foreign diplomats in the United States.

In 2013, the Department developed a new training course available for all employees, which was widely advertised by a cable sent to all diplomatic and consular posts, and in the Department's monthly publication, *State Magazine*. This training uses interactive modules to define human trafficking, identify red flags, and outline the federal government's policy against trafficking in persons. It also provides information on the Department's standards of conduct related to human trafficking, and outlines where to report information about any potential or actual instances of human trafficking or related activities.

In addition to this human trafficking awareness training designed for all employees, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) routinely teaches segments on human trafficking in a variety of courses at the Foreign Service Institute, such as courses focused on global studies and human rights, as well as courses for Contracting Officer Representatives. TIP Office staff members have also been featured speakers at Chiefs of Mission conferences and worked closely with the Department of Homeland Security to update training on human trafficking for all federal acquisitions personnel, including State Department contractor officer representatives.

As noted above, the Department is also finalizing amendments to its policies that apply to all executive branch employees under Chief of Mission authority personnel regarding trafficking in persons. These amendments will update the Foreign Affairs Manual language on notoriously disgraceful conduct to include

trafficking in persons, as well as highlight trafficking in persons as an offense subject to disciplinary action.

With respect to employee responsibilities abroad, the Department is in the final stages of updating the Foreign Affairs Manual by adding new policies regarding personal domestic worker employment that address the employment of domestic workers by U.S. Foreign Service personnel under Chief of Mission authority. These new policies are expected to ensure that personal domestic workers employed in the homes of Foreign Service personnel abroad are treated fairly.

Second, you asked about the serious and deeply troubling case of former US Foreign Service Officer (FSO) Linda Howard and her husband Russell Howard. Linda Howard began her employment as a Foreign Service Specialist in 1991. Her first overseas assignment was in Paris, France in 1991. She then served in Geneva in 1993 until her next assignment at the USUN in 1996. Then in 1999 until 2002, she was assigned to Melbourne, Australia. She served in Guatemala in 2002 through 2005. In 2005, she served in Sanaa, Yemen until her assignment in Toyko. In 2008 and 2009, she served in Tokyo, Japan. She served in various domestic assignments from 2009 until her retirement from the Foreign Service in 2012.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) conducted an investigation into the serious allegations against the Howards and also referred the matter to the Department of Justice. I would be happy to make DS officials available to brief you about the investigation.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Frifield".

Julia Frifield  
Assistant Secretary  
Legislative Affairs

cc: The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy