

**Combating Corruption in the OSCE Region:
The Link Between Security and Good Governance
Rep. Chris Smith, Co-Chairman
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to everyone joining us this morning. Combating corruption has been a priority of this Commission almost since its inception, and I am delighted that we are spending some time today with the OSCE Economic Coordinator and our other witnesses to further our understanding of this important topic.

Corruption in the public sector fuels many of the ills that plague OSCE states – among them is certainly trafficking in human beings. In case after case after case, we have seen examples that show corruption was responsible for the border guard turning a blind eye to the victim, and was responsible for police colluding with traffickers to thwart a rescue, and was responsible for the prosecutor refusing to bring charges against a trafficker.

I have been fighting human trafficking for over fifteen years and am the author of the landmark United States' landmark Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and its 2003 and 2005 reauthorizations. These laws created a bold new strategy that included sheltering, asylum and other protections for the victims, long jail sentences and asset confiscation for the traffickers, and tough sanctions for governments that fail to meet minimum standards. They also created the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, which evaluates nearly every country's progress toward achieving the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking over the previous year.

We have seen enormous progress in so many countries, but fighting corruption remains one of the most difficult—and critical—aspects of combatting human trafficking. Victims need to know that if they come forward, or if they share their stories with prosecutors after rescue, they will be safe and justice will be done. Corrupt government officials need to know that no one is above the law and that their crime of exploiting those they are supposed to protect will not go unpunished.

No country is immune to corruption, including our own. Just this year in Washington D.C. two policemen were caught in separate instances of human trafficking. One, sadly, took his own life before trial. The other was sentenced to 7 years in prison, with 10 years of supervision after release.

While we all hope that our governments and law enforcement are free of corruption, a lack of prosecutions for corruption can be a bad sign. Ukraine is at a turning point in many respects, not the least of which is whether it will ensure that its public servants are in office to serve the country, rather than their own prurient interests. Ukraine is to be commended for making anti-corruption legislation, which was adopted in October, a priority for the new parliament.

As Dr. Mark Galeotti's¹ research has recently indicated, Russian criminal networks have moved in to take advantage of Crimean port of Sevastopol and the influx of \$4.5 billion in development funds from Russia. Many are concerned that Crimea will become an international center of organized crime. While we must do nothing that implies recognition of Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea, we

¹ *Professor of Global Affairs at New York University's School of Professional Studies – Center for Global Affairs* (http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/how-the-invasion-of-ukraine-is-shaking-up-the-global-crime-scene-1106).

should do everything we can to hold Russia responsible for any smuggling and trafficking in Crimea – and anything we can to stop it.