



KINGDOM OF ESWATINI



PRIVATE AND CABINET OFFICE

**PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF
WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND PEOPLE
SMUGGLING – 30 JULY 2026**

Today, the Kingdom of Eswatini joins the international community in commemorating the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons under the theme **"Trapped Behind the Scam."**

This year's theme serves as a timely reminder that human traffickers are increasingly using deception and fraudulent schemes to target vulnerable individuals. Through fake job advertisements, fraudulent recruitment agencies, misleading scholarship opportunities, online relationships, and promises of employment abroad, traffickers continue to exploit the hopes and aspirations of people seeking better opportunities. Behind these scams often lies forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced criminality, and other forms of abuse that rob victims of their freedom, dignity, and human rights.

In recent years, traffickers have become more sophisticated, exploiting technology and digital platforms to recruit, manipulate, and control victims. Social media, messaging applications, and online recruitment sites have become tools through which traffickers hide behind fake identities and fraudulent opportunities. Emerging trends now include the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI), voice-cloning technology, and cybercrime as tools to lure unsuspecting victims into exploitation.

The Kingdom of Eswatini is also taking note of a disturbing global trend that is increasingly affecting countries across the world, including our own region: **trafficking for forced criminality**. In this form of trafficking, educated young people and skilled professionals are recruited through promises of well-paying jobs abroad, only to find themselves coerced into committing cybercrime, online fraud, and other criminal activities under threats, intimidation, or violence. Many do not realise they have been deceived until they find themselves trapped behind scams and subjected to exploitation far from home.

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini remains steadfast in its commitment to combating trafficking in persons through a coordinated national response founded on the principles of **Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership**.

This commitment is demonstrated through the implementation of the **People Trafficking and People Smuggling (Prohibition) Act** and the National Strategic Framework and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is currently under review to ensure that it responds to emerging trends and evolving forms of exploitation. Government also continues to strengthen the coordination role of the Secretariat for the Prevention of People Trafficking and People Smuggling, working closely with the National Multi-Sectoral Task Force and all relevant stakeholders to deliver a coordinated and effective national response.

The Government further recognises the important work undertaken through the National Multi-Sectoral Task Force on People Trafficking and People Smuggling, which brings together Government ministries and departments, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, development partners, and other stakeholders to coordinate the country's response to trafficking in persons.

The Kingdom of Eswatini recognises that trafficking in persons is a transnational crime that requires strong regional and international cooperation. As a signatory to the **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime**, and the **SADC Protocol on Combating Trafficking in Persons**, our country remains committed to honouring its international obligations through the continued implementation of national programmes that strengthen prevention, victim protection, law enforcement cooperation, and cross-border collaboration.

Beyond strengthening legislation and institutional coordination, Government continues to invest in public awareness campaigns, capacity-building for frontline officers, victim identification and referral mechanisms, and partnerships with neighbouring countries and international organisations. These efforts are aimed not only at bringing perpetrators to justice but also at preventing trafficking before it occurs, protecting vulnerable individuals, and ensuring that survivors receive the care, rehabilitation, and support they need to rebuild their lives.

We commend the dedication of the Royal Eswatini Police Service, immigration authorities, prosecutors, social welfare officers, labour inspectors, healthcare professionals, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, and community structures that continue to play a critical role in identifying victims, supporting survivors, and bringing traffickers to justice.

However, Government action alone is not enough.

As traffickers continue to adapt their methods, every emaSwati has a role to play in safeguarding our communities. Parents, guardians, teachers, employers, community leaders, and young people must remain vigilant against fraudulent schemes designed to exploit vulnerable people. Be

cautious of unsolicited offers of employment, scholarships, travel, modelling opportunities, romantic relationships, or investment opportunities, particularly those that require upfront payments, request personal documents, or promise unusually high rewards with little or no verification.

The message behind this year's theme is therefore simple but powerful:

If an opportunity appears too good to be true, it may very well be a trap.

The message to all emaSwati is equally clear: **Verify before you trust. Verify before you travel.**

We urge members of the public to confirm employment opportunities, recruitment agencies, scholarships, and travel arrangements through the relevant authorities before making payments, signing contracts, or sharing personal documentation. If in doubt, seek guidance from the appropriate Government institutions before making life-changing decisions.

To our young people, your dreams and ambitions are valid and important. However, do not allow desperation or excitement to cloud your judgement. Exercise caution when approached with promises of employment, scholarships, travel opportunities, or lucrative business ventures, especially through social media and online platforms. A few moments spent verifying an opportunity could save your life.

On this important day, we recognise the courage and resilience of survivors of trafficking whose experiences continue to strengthen our resolve to eradicate this crime and ensure that victims receive the protection, rehabilitation, and access to justice they deserve.

As the Kingdom of Eswatini commemorates this day, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening national, regional, and international cooperation in the fight against trafficking in persons and people smuggling. We renew our collective commitment to ensuring that no person in Eswatini falls victim to traffickers hiding behind scams, false promises, and criminal networks that prey on human vulnerability.

The fight against trafficking in persons is not the responsibility of Government alone; it requires the vigilance, cooperation, and commitment of every citizen. Together, we can build an Eswatini where every person lives in dignity, freedom, and safety, and where traffickers find no place to operate.

May God bless you all, and may God bless the Kingdom of Eswatini.

RUSSELL MMISO DLAMINI

Prime Minister

30 July 2026