



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**MAYOR LONDON BREED ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES  
TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SAN FRANCISCO**

*City Environmental Health Inspectors are now trained to recognize signs of human trafficking and refer cases to the Police Department. New signage at SFO will help victims of human trafficking immediately connect with resources and support from trained Airport staff.*

**San Francisco, CA** — Mayor London N. Breed today announced two new initiatives to combat and prevent human trafficking in San Francisco. The San Francisco International Airport, the Department of Public Health, and the Department on the Status of Women have joined together to advance two efforts that will help identify potential victims of human trafficking and provide victims with the support and services they need.

Mayor Breed made the announcement at a press conference hosted by the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFCaHT) to commence January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. SFCaHT is a group of anti-trafficking advocates, service providers, survivors, and Bay Area government and law enforcement officials.

The COVID-19 health and economic crisis has potentially deepened vulnerabilities for people at risk of being trafficked or currently trafficked. Fifty-one human trafficking cases were reported directly to the San Francisco Police Department in 2020. These two initiatives are launching to promote vigilance against human trafficking at a time when cases may be driven further underground.

“Every San Franciscan deserves to feel safe and live without fear of exploitation. Even as we face one of the greatest public health crises of our lifetime, our work to end human trafficking in our City must continue,” said Mayor Breed. “These new initiatives, along with the hard work of numerous service providers and our law enforcement partners, will help us advance our work to support survivors and end human trafficking in San Francisco.”

Starting this month, the Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Inspectors will begin incorporating new anti-human trafficking training into their inspection process. The Environmental Health Branch employs approximately 100 inspectors who conduct regular on-site inspections of over 9,000 businesses, such as restaurants and bars, gas stations, massage establishments, and residential hotels. All staff will be trained to recognize the Red Flags, or most common [signs of human trafficking](#), and make referrals to the San Francisco Police Department for investigation within 24 hours whenever signs of potential human trafficking are observed in health-permitted businesses.



The San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is implementing a campaign to respond to instances of trafficking that may occur by airplane. Over 1,000 bathroom stalls in both the domestic and international terminals have been fitted with multi-lingual signs to urge a person suspected of being trafficked to call or text the Airport's hotline number for immediate help and services from trained airport staff.

"SFO has taken a comprehensive approach to adopting anti-trafficking training and protocols that equip employees to recognize and report signs of trafficking, and enable safe interventions for potential victims," said Ivar Satero, Airport Director, San Francisco International Airport. "The message to traffickers is that SFO will do all that is necessary to disrupt their illicit and unconscionable business."

The new signage at SFO is a long-lasting intervention campaign and the Department on the Status of Women will track the success of the program on a yearly basis.

"In the midst of a global health pandemic, racial injustice, and economic distress, the Department on the Status of Women understands that trafficking survivors have been especially impacted," said Kimberly N. Ellis, Director of the Department on the Status of Women. "In 2021 and beyond, our department, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, other city agencies, and our community partners, will continue to gather data to inform all stakeholders and will work towards policy and systems change for all people who have been impacted by trafficking."

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, San Francisco is one of the nation's high intensity areas for commercial sexual exploitation of children as related to human trafficking. In 2019, the Mayor's Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking found that there were an estimated 673 cases of human trafficking within the last two years reported to local service providers. The largest number of cases were young women of color between the ages of 18-24 years old. The report found that establishments such as restaurants, massage establishments, and single room occupancy hotel rooms are vulnerable to human trafficking.

"As a law enforcement agency, it is our responsibility to ensure the safety of those we serve — including those who find themselves physically, emotionally, and economically forced into any activity against their will," said Chief William Scott, San Francisco Police Department. "At the San Francisco Police Department, we recognize that victims of human trafficking are often coerced into criminal conduct that puts them into contact with our officers. That's why we continue to assign dedicated investigators within our Special Victims Unit to address the myriad sensitivities of human trafficking crimes. We place enormous value our partnerships with city agencies and victim advocates to combat this kind of exploitation, and we will continue to collaborate with our partners to ensure that all human trafficking victims have access to appropriate resources and services."

For the last ten years, the Environmental Health Branch of the Department of Public Health has been collaborating with state and local labor law enforcement agencies to fight against labor exploitation and its negative impact on health. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, San Francisco trafficking service providers are continuing to provide high quality, wraparound



services to survivors. One legal service provider is working with nine clients who have been labor trafficked this year, seven of whom were trafficked by the same individual.

“Today’s announcement builds on the Department of Public Health’s ongoing commitment to combatting labor exploitation and human trafficking by reducing the health impacts suffered by those exploited through these illegal activities,” said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. “With the addition of 100 trained regulatory inspectors to this effort, the initiative will further reduce and prevent labor exploitation and human trafficking. During their routine work, these inspectors will be able to help identify signs of labor exploitation and human trafficking and make referrals to the appropriate agencies for empowered recovery.”

If you or someone you know may be a victim of human trafficking, you can call 9-1-1, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888, or contact one of the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking service providers:

<https://www.sfcaht.org/by-category-of-service.html>.

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