



REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE  
THE BALI PROCESS

## RSO Highlights

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to Act



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Regional Support Office  
of the Bali Process



**313 people trained**



**7 conferences and events**



**1 new publication**

### Bali Process 20th Anniversary event brings Member States back together

Bali Process Member States gathered together in one place for the first time since the pandemic, to [celebrate 20 years of The Bali Process](#) and discuss regional priorities and challenges that have emerged around people smuggling and trafficking in persons – particularly following the reopening of international borders and ongoing displacement of refugees from prolonged political and armed crises in the region.



The two-day dialogue, hosted by the RSO in Bangkok, drew 104 attendees from across the Bali Process' geographical landscape. Attendees discussed shared concerns around irregular migratory challenges, how best to facilitate international cooperation through the Bali Process, and provided feedback to assist the RSO on future activities.

Shared concerns and areas of focus included the need for strengthened border management systems, the challenges of people smuggling by sea and air, evolving irregular migration and trafficking in persons trends in the region, the growing role played by technology, the need to address corruption, strengthen the justice sector and develop effective public awareness and information campaigns.

Following the Constructive Dialogue an Outcomes Statement will be released to Bali Process Members and Observers which will be a key document that will drive further engagement and dialogue and will aid in the development of the RSO Strategy 2023-24 and Annual Work Plan 2023.

## RSO funds regional dialogue promoting partnership and cooperation on migrant protection

Migration across the Bali Process region doubled from 5.1 million in 2000 to 10.6 million in 2020 – with two thirds of this accounted for by migration within the region. As of mid-2021, Asia and the Pacific hosted 4.22 million refugees and asylum seekers, accounting for 17 per cent of global numbers.

As demand for labour and accompanying migration levels rise again following the re-opening of international borders, regional cooperation and building capacity to support migrants – particularly vulnerable populations – is vital.



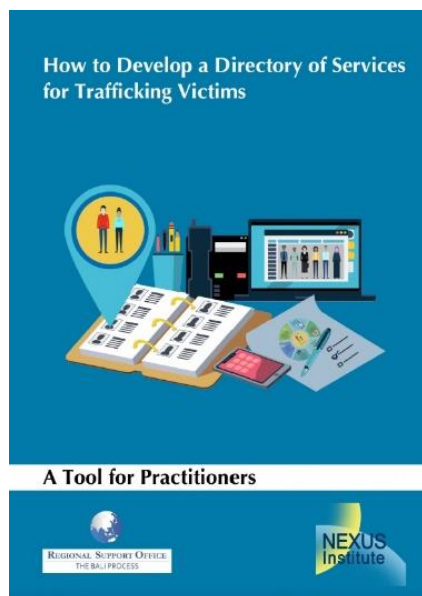
The RSO was pleased to [fund a regional dialogue](#) in September, hosted by the International Organization for Migration, which brought together government officials from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to exchange experiences, best practices and challenges in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration and protecting migrants' rights. Attendees identified priorities around:

- strengthening access to protection services for migrants
- reinforcing legal frameworks for counter-smuggling and trafficking
- identifying pathways for dignified return and readmission
- implementing alternatives to immigration detention.

On the final day, government delegations engaged in discussions to identify areas of cooperation and partnerships – and where efforts should be focused to strengthen collaboration and impact of efforts. Future activities identified include ongoing bilateral discussions – particularly between source, transit and destination countries, strengthening legal frameworks, strengthening capability to address regional issues such as online scams, and a focus on victim protection and assistance.

The work also built on an independent research project commissioned by the RSO in July to undertake stakeholder interviews in Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia on return, readmission, and alternatives to detention. The research builds on the knowledge base around existing legal frameworks, policies, and good practices – and by sharing challenges and best practices amongst stakeholder countries, aims to inform development of future policies and procedures.

This work is a key outcome for the Dialogue on the Management of Irregular Migration in South-East Asia (DIMM), which is implemented by the RSO and funded by the RSO. An outcome report including suggested ways forward will be presented at the next Bali Process Technical Expert Working Group on Return and Reintegration.



## New publication supports Member States to develop a Directory of Services for Trafficking Victims

Trafficking in Persons is by some estimates now one of the most profitable organised crimes in the world, with more than two-thirds of victims (25 million people) from East-Asia and the Pacific. Efforts to support trafficking victims are often hampered by shortages of available information and resources.

On World Day Against Trafficking in Persons in July, the RSO and the NEXUS Institute launched a new publication, providing step-by-step guidance on how to design and implement a [Directory of Services for Trafficking Victims](#) in a specific area or country. A directory of services is an important tool in supporting trafficking victims to get the information and help

they need most.

The tool includes an accompanying Microsoft Excel template in which practitioners can compile information about services to support victims in identifying their needs and the support available. The tool has been made available in English, Bahasa Indonesian, Malaysian, Vietnamese, and Thai. There is also an accompanying Instructional video to support practitioners.

Two further publications are being planned around special and additional measures for victim-witnesses, and access to remedies and support for victims. The RSO and Nexus will also co-host a series of thematic dialogues, exploring the principles and guidance in these series in further detail with ASEAN member states.

## Training and skills-sharing

Capacity-building and training forms a core component of the RSO's mandate in supporting Bali Process Members. For more information on training the RSO can provide, and how we can support you, please get in touch: [info@rso.baliprocess.net](mailto:info@rso.baliprocess.net). Please also share any suggestions for training with us.

### In-person training returns for front-line border officers on trafficking in persons

The RSO delivered a week-long pilot course on trafficking in persons to 24 officials of the Indonesian National Police, who are stationed at various borders across the provinces of Indonesia.



Topics ranged from supporting and protecting victims of Trafficking in Persons, to the development of risk assessments in the management of Trafficking in Persons cases, to crime scene investigation and securing evidence. The RSO piloted a new curriculum for Front-line Border Officials, which was developed in 2021. Training was delivered with support from the Australian Federal Police.

Follow up will take place with participants in the new year, to evaluate impact the training has had for participants in their work. The course will also now undergo some further development before being uploaded to our website, with plans to deliver the training again at a regional level.

*"This course was valuable to me because the material presented to us is related to what we do at work and is trying to fit into the local context"* Testimonial from session attendee

### Supporting regional action plans around human trafficking

54 participants from 15 Bali Process Member States attended the RSO's four-day **Intensive Course on Measures to Address Human Trafficking: the 3P Paradigm**, which supported awareness and understanding across the four pillars of anti-trafficking efforts – prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships. Each day was dedicated to a different pillar, and combined lectures, group discussion, case study presentations, and action-planning.

14 subject-matter experts, from IOM Iraq, the Korean Institute for National Security Strategy, ASEAN-ACT, the Blue Dragon Foundation, the US Department of Homeland Security, UNODC Center for Excellence, ICRC and the RSO delivered the training. The training was delivered in partnership with UNITAR CIFAL, and ran on an interactive platform called Gather to enable wide attendance amid restrictions on travel.

Participants were asked to submit a trend and SWOT analysis of their country or organisation's policy and strategy related to trafficking in persons. The RSO reviewed the submissions and invited selected participants from the Philippines, Nepal, New Zealand, India, and Cambodia to present their case studies – enabling first-hand perspectives from practitioners on the ground and to enable new insights. Participants were asked to develop action plans out of the session – and some 20 have been shared with the RSO to date.

### **Embedding a victim-centred approach in tackling irregular migration**

The RSO delivered a new two-day workshop to The Malaysian Immigration Department on **Addressing People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons** in July – a new self-delivered programme for the RSO. This was delivered virtually, with twenty-two Immigration Officers [gaining essential knowledge and skills](#) to detect and respond to incidents of people smuggling and trafficking in persons – with focus throughout on a victim-centered approach, and the benefits that follow. Embedding a victim-centred approach as best practice in tackling human smuggling and trafficking in persons forms part of one of the new RSO thematic areas of focus, and will be integrated across future trainings and activities. The training was supported by subject matter experts from the Australian Border Force and IOM Thailand.

### **Building capacity for law enforcement in tackling trafficking in persons**

The RSO ran a **Basic Course on Combatting Trafficking in Persons** at the People's Police Academy of Viet Nam (PPA) over 27-28 August. The hybrid workshop is targeted for PPA cadets to enhance their understanding on how to identify and protect victims of trafficking, and support victims in the criminal justice system to prosecute traffickers. An advanced course will follow in November.

### **Upcoming RSO capacity building activities:**

- **October 31 – November 4:** Regional Workshop on Combatting People Smuggling – participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka.
- **November 10-11:** Advanced Course on Combatting Human Trafficking – People's Police Academy of Viet Nam
- **November 21-25:** Workshop on Combatting People Smuggling
- **December 12-16:** Border Management by Air Workshop

## Trafficking in Persons

### **New seminar to be developed on Criminalising, Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons**

Members of The Bali Process Working Group on Trafficking in Persons identified new and ongoing key regional challenges in counter-trafficking in their annual meeting in August – with technology being a key priority. The Working Group has committed through the RSO and the Government of Malaysia to develop a new seminar on Criminalising, Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons, with a focus on the role that technology can play here. The seminar will be a first activity in part of a longer-term programme of work to build capacity in this area.

### **RSO supports Fiji to develop referral mechanisms around trafficking**

The RSO provided recommendations to the Fiji Ministry of Defence, National Security and Policing, around the development of migrant referral mechanisms to State agencies and civil society partners at a Human Trafficking – National Referral Mechanism Workshop. Development of a national referral mechanism is a key strategy outlined in Fiji's National Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy for 2021-2026.

## Irregular migration and regional priorities

### **RSO and UNHCR share recommendations from Civil Registration Assessment pilots**

Gaps in civil registration and legal identity documentation expose people to a heightened risk of human trafficking – and [increasing access to civil registration](#) can support vulnerable populations. Following the completion of a pilot project on universal civil registration schemes in Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan, the RSO and UNHCR shared learnings and recommendations for wider adoption of civil registration schemes across other Bali Process Member States.

### **Support for voluntary return of migrants in Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand**

The RSO and IOM worked with Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand to support ten migrants to voluntarily return to their countries of origin: Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan, through the [Bali Process Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program](#). The scheme was established to support vulnerable migrants who wish to return to their home countries but are unable to do so, and to enable a dignified return and reintegration.

## People smuggling

### **Roundtable discussion with Viet Nam on strengthening the response to people smuggling**

The RSO and UNODC hosted a [roundtable with the Viet Nam National Assembly's Judicial Affairs Committee](#), to support Viet Nam's efforts to build capacity in responding to people smuggling. The roundtable outlined the international legal framework on smuggling of migrants, and key obligations – and we look forward to continuing work with colleagues in Viet Nam as they move towards joining 150 States who have adopted the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol.

## Transnational crime and technology

### Reviewing Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders

The RSO contributed to an expert group meeting convened by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the University of Essex in June 2022 – to discuss updates to the 2014 OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders – taking in account the increasing reliance on new and emerging technologies in border governance.

Digital Technologies and Innovation forms one of the six Thematic Areas of Focus within the RSO's 2021-22 Annual Work Plan, and we recognise that understanding and drawing effectively on technology advances is a priority area of focus for Member States – to support governments and law enforcement to work collaboratively to consider how technology tools can be used in prevention, disruption, investigation and response activities.

## Engage with us!

- **October 26-27: Regional Support Office 10th Anniversary Border Cooperation in Practice and Technology Forum**

The RSO is marking our tenth anniversary with the Border Cooperation in Practice and Technology Forum. The theme of the Border Forum is the nexus between technology and crimes related to irregular migration, and aims to facilitate dialogue and collaboration around how technology can be harnessed to combat people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime in the Asia-Pacific Region following the opening of international borders.

- **December 1 (TBC): RSO 2022 Members Engagement Function**

The RSO will be hosting an informal engagement function, to bring together Bali Process stakeholders based in Thailand with the aim of reengaging with Government of Thailand agencies and other stakeholders now that in-person functions can be held. The Function will also reflect on the activities and achievements over the past twelve months and informally discuss the irregular migration challenges impacting Thailand and the broader region.

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