Judges' Summit on Human Trafficking and Organized Crime

As Isaiah prophesised long ago, "Peace is the fruit of justice" (cf. Is 32:17). The main task that human society has given its judges since the beginning of time is to establish justice in each particular case: to each his own (unicuique suum). Without it, there is no real peace in society.

Responding to this call of society, rejecting the ever-present pressure from governments, private institutions and, of course, organised crime, Pope Francis wishes to see judges fully empowered and made fully aware of their irreplaceable mission in dealing with the challenges of the 'globalization of indifference'.
The globalised society seeking profit above all else — producing a 'throwaway culture', as Pope Francis denounced it in *Evangelii Gaudium and Laudato si'* — has generated innumerable marginalised and excluded people. In a world geared towards profit alone, the informal revenues of international mafia and other organised crime syndicates are responsible for an estimated 10% of global GDP. Although countries do not officially recognise revenues coming from organised crime, some of them nevertheless do include this data in their GDP.

It is estimated that 40 million people are victims of the modern forms of slavery and trafficking in terms of forced labour, prostitution, organ trade and drug trafficking. The 60 million displaced persons and 130 million refugees created as a consequence of war, terrorism and climate change, are a breeding ground for traffickers. While, for the time being, uncorrupted institutions and international agents do not have the appropriate legal instruments to meet the challenges posed by global indifference to the extreme forms indicated, traffickers and the mafia take advantage of

these gaps in international law and governance to juggle globally with national and international “structures of sin”, which are very apt at facilitating the making of money by enslaving the most vulnerable.

Justice has come a long way — but not far enough — in this globalised world. The violence that has become pervasive in contemporary society is proof of this. It is sadly common — but all too superficial — to reduce violence to pure physical aggression. New forms of slavery, wounded bodies and souls, organ procurement, forced labour, kidnapping, terrorism and wars based on dishonest motives and other spurious interests are all strong manifestations of revenge and prevarication. In other words, violence is born of the presumption of individuals or groups taking the law into their own hands and when human beings possess other human beings as their own property. Essentially, justice combats not only blunt violence, but also the many hidden forms of subtle violence that I have mentioned above. In short, justice combats revenge and prevarication, which are the most dramatic simulations of justice: that is to say, wanting to take the law into one’s own hands or the act of considering other people as simply a means to one’s own advantage. In this sense, the fundamental act that defines a society grounded on justice is the virtue by which society impedes the capability and the right of individuals and groups to take the law into their own hands — or better, the act by means of which society empowers judges to apply the law. The great prophet Isaiah had already recognised that the final goal of the act of passing judgment was social peace rather than safety or security. The final goal of social peace reveals something deeper in society — something that has to do with reciprocal understanding, recognition, reconciliation and even love and forgiveness.

The global society needs a new beginning rooted in justice. No instance of justice can tolerate the violence of slavery or of organised crime, and no power must be allowed to corrupt justice. Judges are called to be fully aware of this challenge, share their experiences and work together to open up new paths of justice and promote human dignity, freedom, responsibility, happiness and peace.

We would like to hear from judges how they deal with the issues of sex trafficking, slave labour, organ trade, drug trafficking and organised crime; how their own judicial systems could better incorporate our humanitarian values; and how capacity-building could enhance Judges’ appreciation of the needs of victims and not merely the penalization of traffickers. One question without an adequate answer that keeps coming up in our meetings is: how many human traffickers, pimps, and drug traffickers are caught and how many ill-gotten gains have been confiscated and directed towards former victims and society? Judges will have a few minutes each to present a specific case they have worked on and share their opinion of what will be (or ought to be) required in the future.

Presidents of law courts and lawyers who have addressed this issue are also asked to present a general overview of this distressing problem and suggest possible solutions at the national and international level. We intend to conclude with a collective call to justice in order to save the

victims of slavery and organised crime, and thereby further the cause of social peace.

Just as in Greece, in Pythagoras' time, great thinkers were called "lovers of wisdom" or philosophers, in the Christian era Jesus Christ demands that Christians be and be called "lovers of justice": "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness; Blessed are the peacemakers". The reward is worthy of the challenge, "for they will be satisfied; they will be called children of God; they will see God" (cfr Mt 5: 6-9).

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