

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

IHG continues support of human-trafficking survivors with Atlanta forum

February 27, 2023



Several prominent members of Atlanta's community attended the forum on Feb. 22. Image credit: IHG Group

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Hospitality group InterContinental Hotels Group is continuing to bring attention to the plight of human trafficking by giving survivors a voice.

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On Feb. 22, the group hosted a forum in Atlanta, in partnership with **Polaris**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting and preventing labor and sex trafficking in North America. There, Polaris revealed its National Survivor Study (NSS), which documents survivors experiences and needs in an effort to develop better strategies toward preventing and eradicating the crime.

"IHG's purpose in convening this conversation with our partner Polaris, trafficking survivors, elected officials and businesses is two-fold to keep trafficking prevention in the spotlight, but also shine a new light on barriers that prevent survivors' livelihoods," said Elie Maalouf, CEO of **IHG Hotels & Resorts Americas**, in a statement.

"Putting a stop to trafficking requires deep collaboration and commitment, from the hotel training we require across more than 4,300 Americas IHG hotels to partnering with our industry, nonprofits and government," he said.

Safe house

Among those in attendance at the forum were Georgia's First Lady Marty Kemp, State Attorney General Chris Carr, as well as Nikki Clifton, president of social impact for the UPS Foundation.

Joined by executives from several of Atlanta's top businesses, they discussed ways by which all communities in the state of Georgia can work together to support the anti-trafficking mission.

Founded in 2002 and based in Washington, D.C., Polaris has won several awards for its efforts, including the Skoll Award for Entrepreneurship, given to those organizations which promote large-scale change.



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A post shared by IHG Hotels & Resorts (@ihghotels)

For its part, IHG, in alignment with an industry-wide effort, has taken several measures both practical and financial to help mitigate trafficking.

Last month, the group donated \$500,000 to the "No Room for Trafficking Survivor Fund" (NRFT), which invests in organizations and initiatives that address the short-term and long-term needs of trafficking survivors.

NRFT is presented by the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) Foundation, which offers educational and other services to the hospitality industry. In addition to funding, the foundation provides guidance materials, training programs and events to help industry employees learn to identify potential trafficking-related activity on hotel grounds and beyond.

More than 70,000 industry employees have completed this training since 2020 ([see story](#)).

The report noted a number of trends among the survivor community. Eighty-three percent reported having experienced poverty prior to their trafficking, while financial abuse is an element of the trafficking ordeal itself for 60 percent of survey participants.

Seventy-five percent cited behavioral and mental health services as crucial to their recovery.

More information about the National Survivor Study can be found [here](#).

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