

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

Co-Sponsored by:

- *Sisters of the Divine Savior*
- *Capacitar International, Inc.*

1 This issue highlights the ongoing efforts to advocate for victims of human trafficking, particularly through legislative action.

Vol. 2 No.1 January 15, 2004

Resource Materials



the UISG/USG worldwide pay for these translations.

The contents of the colorful Kit include: definitions of trafficking, the causes behind trafficking, a theological reflection. The Kit provides strategies for use by religious congregations and their collaborators. The appendices contain detailed information about the global patterns of supply and demand, international standards for combating trafficking, a listing of organizations working against trafficking, and an excellent bibliography. Finally, there is a suggested way to conduct an informational workshop of up to five hours in length.

Trafficking in Women and Children

is a 63-page *Information and Workshop Kit* prepared by an eleven-member *Working Group of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission (JPIC)* of the *International Union of Superiors General (UISG/USG)* based in Rome, Italy. The Kit will be available in Spanish, French, English and Italian. The funds generated through sales of these Kits (approx. US \$ 10. for one or US \$ 18. for two) to members of

**To place an order, contact
Br. Anton de Roeper FSC at:
aderoeper@lasalle.org**

**Important actions
needing your response**

- MRS Project of the USCCB (pgs. 4-5)

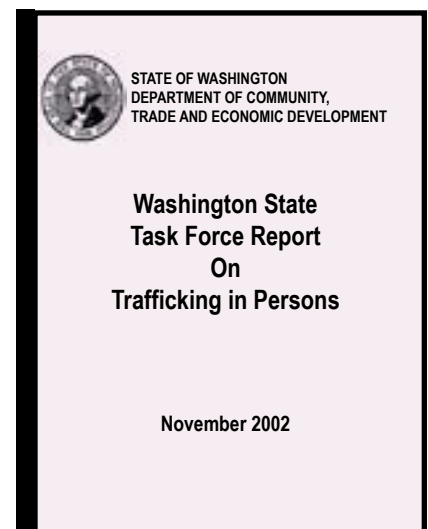
- Endorsement of International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2003 (pg. 5)

Washington State Task Force Report

Legislators, activists, and researchers worked side-by-side to adopt anti-trafficking legislation and establish the first statewide *Anti-trafficking Task Force* in the U.S.A.

The 50-member Task Force measured and evaluated state anti-trafficking activities, identified services available to trafficked persons at local, state and federal levels, and made recommendations for a coordinated system of care for trafficked persons. The Report

Task Force cont. pg. 2





Advocacy

2

Task Force cont.

summarizes the Task Force's findings and recommendations.

The report identifies implications for governmental and non-governmental entities and how trafficking will impact Americans and the global community. In addition to implementing the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA)* in Washington State, the Task Force pushed for state regulation of the *international matchmaking industry* (mail order brides). (See article, pg. 5.) The catalyst for these actions was five court cases involving the serious abuse or murder of women duped into servitude. The Task Force found that adequate protection and assistance to victims, however, is limited by insufficient resources in WA.

The Task Force Report made recommendations to the Governor and the State Legislature on policy, services, training, and education concerning trafficking. It also recommended that the Legislature continue funding the Task Force. Community agencies and service providers pledged to seek solutions through federal funding opportunities and cooperate in prevention and prosecution efforts.

Obtain copies of the Report from the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy 906 Columbia Street, SW P. O. Box 48304 Olympia, WA 98504-8304 Tel:360-725-2895 or 800-634-4473

Which Alternative to Poverty?

In a copyrighted BBC News article entitled, "*Ethiopian Girls Driven to Prostitution*," Mr. Anania Admasu, Director of *Child Aid Ethiopia (Chadet)*, explains that many young children in Ethiopia are forced to migrate to cities in hopes of finding family members to live with and jobs to help overcome family poverty.

Chadet has placed a drop-in center a short distance from the Addis Ababa bus station, where vulnerable children and teenagers arrive among the 10,000 passengers, who pass through the bus station in the Ethiopian capital daily. Because there is also a growing demand for children as sex partners, due to the false idea that children cannot transmit HIV/AIDS, *Chadet* uses song and dance to draw vulnerable youth to the center. The drop-in center offers youth a chance for showers, a place to rest, games and a library, and free counseling.

A religious sister nurse oversees the counseling, through which *Chadet* tries to offer alternatives to those young girls who feel forced into prostitution as their families' way out of poverty. The drop-in clients learn about HIV/AIDS, the risks involved in pregnancy, and options for alternative ways to earn money. Since they are unable to offer food, clothing and housing, *Chadet* staff can only hope the information shared alerts youth to the harmful consequences of prostitution.

An eighteen year old, one of 29 among the current 100 prostitutes who have found an alternative, explained that because both her parents died, she was obliged to get money to feed her many brothers and sisters. "*My only choice seemed to be prostitution. This meant having sex with many men. I found this morally degrading and damaging to my dignity.*"

With the help of *Chadet* she got a grant from a charitable organization and opened a small teashop. She is also going to school and helps counsel other vulnerable girls, telling them they, "*should not sleep with too many boys.*"

See page 7 web sites for the BBC story.



Photo: MRS/USCCB



Advocacy

A Miracle in Amman, Jordan

It had been a cold and rainy day in downtown Amman, Jordan. After having met and spoken to a number of Sri Lankan housemaids in a shopping area, we decided that it was time to head for home. Just then, two women approached us. One was elderly and obviously tired and sick. The other was a small woman, who looked rather scared.

The sick woman, almost boldly as if not wanting to miss an important chance, said, “Sisters, please help me!” Now, not that we had not heard that plea before, but because it was said so urgently, so compellingly, we had to stop and listen. She identified herself as “Rita”. Then she told her story:

“I came to Jordan six years ago, because I needed money to take care of my husband who is paralyzed, and to help educate my children. In the beginning, working for this Arab family was good. Although I never had a free day or much privacy, I did receive my salary of US \$60. per month.

But gradually things began to get worse. Only occasionally I received some money. The workload became heavier and I was not allowed to return to Sri Lanka after my two-year contract was completed.

The employer told me that soon he would let me go, but it never happened. I finally found out that the employer had not paid my visa and working permit for several years. Also he had confiscated my passport. I think that because of the worry for my husband and my family and the realization that I was an illegal migrant, I became sick. I now have to spend the little money I have on medicine, lab-tests and doctor’s visits.”

“Please, sisters, help me!” she pleaded again. Although the case sounded complicated, we promised Rita we would do what we could. We contacted the employer by phone. He was not unkind, but obviously did not have the financial means to pay the annual government fees, return ticket and back salary.

Somehow we also managed to contact Rita’s daughter in Sri Lanka. Again the plea, “Please, help our mother to come home!” This time we decided to go to the home of the employer, which required some dangerous driving. After the usual talking, he finally said, “I will do what I can; perhaps in a month I’ll let her go.”



S. Concy SDS speaking with Sri Lankan maids working in Amman, Jordan

We almost felt like Moses telling the Pharaoh to let the people go!

However, it did not seem very promising for Rita. Except for a little aid in buying medicine, we had no way to help her leave Jordan.

And then, suddenly almost overnight, Rita was gone! The employer did something extraordinary that we had never heard of before. Not having the means to pay all the money, he decided to sell a piece of property – something very precious in the small country of Jordan – and so paid the visa, the ticket, and most of the back salary.

The tremendous faith of this woman, her longsuffering, and her courage to risk asking help had brought her home safely. Unfortunately, not every migrant worker with similar problems is so fortunate!

Ursula Hopfensitz SDS
Concy Perera SDS
Amman, Jordan



Action

4

Safe Sisters, Safe Houses

The issue of human trafficking has been at the center of concern for communities of women religious for several years now. Individual communities have worked to effect justice in this area in a variety of ways:

- some are involved in direct service to victims;
- some are devoting time to the dissemination of information by way of newsletters;
- some are directly involved in educating the public through local conferences and national meetings;
- some are providing in-service education for their personnel.

These are just a few of the ongoing activities religious communities offer related to the protection of trafficking victims, the identification of perpetrators, or the prevention of trafficking.

Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has been in a fortuitous position to take a national lead in this issue. Through a grant received from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services, for example, we sponsored a conference last summer in Baltimore MD specifically for

women religious. We recognized the potential among this group for dedicated and effective action. (Sisters have a history of making things happen!)

Filled to capacity, this meeting generated energy and commitment from the participants, who represented at least 25 religious communities. One of the concerns we shared there was the need for safe houses for victims of trafficking.

***It is time
to implement a system
for that purpose.***

***We are asking
your help.***

Recognizing the fluid nature of religious life and local communities today, we deem it wise to establish a network of safe houses by generating a list of safe people, who will expedite safe housing on an emergency basis to the extent they are able at the time the need presents itself. What MRS needs is a list of Sisters from as many congregations as possible, who are willing to be contacted in the event that there is need for temporary safe housing for a victim. Persons from a broad geographic area would be ideal.

The six points below indicate parameters of the project:

1. MRS will generally initiate the call for a safe house. MRS staff will provide as much information as is known, along with some practical guidelines appropriate to each case.

2. Sisters who agree to be contacted will negotiate the terms with the MRS staff person or agency making the arrangements.

For example, if there are time or other constraints from the potential host-side, the Sister would make those constraints clear to the staff person arranging a safe location for a victim. Or, if funding is needed for the temporary shelter, that would be clarified and negotiated. No assumptions would be made on the part of the requesting agency.

3. The housing Sisters provide need not be with their own communities. Any safe accommodation is appropriate.

4. Sisters who agree to be listed are under no obligation to find housing if, when they receive the request, they are not in a position to do so. Time-lines or local circumstances may prohibit an affirmative response. However, with a long enough resource list from a broad geographic area, we should be able to assist all victims.

5. Sisters, who are willing to commit themselves to this endeavor but feel the need for education about human trafficking, may contact *Mary Ellen Dougherty, SSND at 202-541-3256 for clarification*. However, each case will be unique and the needs of each victim specific, so there will be no clear-cut formula of response.



Action

5

Safe Sisters cont.

6. Finally, given the current rate of victim-identification, it is unlikely that the demand for safe houses will be high at any given moment.

Whether MRS receives three names, or thirty names, the project will begin! The long-range plan will address this need, giving women religious the opportunity to contribute. The short-range need is to begin generating a list, so that MRS is able to assure those funding this project that women religious will participate in a safe house network.

What we hope to receive from many congregations, in order to start this process, is:

- 1). a letter, on official stationery, stating a willingness on the part of the congregation to help in this project. **Please e-mail or post the letter, so it reaches Mary Ellen Dougherty by January 26th.**

Send a copy of the letter to: LLatuda@usccb.org

Nigerian courts condemned Amina Lawal (right) to death by stoning because she bore a child out of wedlock.

*What happened to the man who made her pregnant?
Nothing.*

*World reaction stayed her execution, for now.
We must speak out for all victimized women and children.*

- 2). a list of members willing to be contact persons, with the postal address, e-mail address, and phone number for each sister listed.

“We hope to receive funding to assist us (and you) in this project. **We must meet a January 27, 2004 deadline to do so.**”

So, please provide a few names now, and a longer list later.

That contribution will enable MRS to begin and continue building this project.”

*Welcome to
'Safe Sisters,
Safe Houses'*

*Mary Ellen Dougherty SSND
MDougherty@usccb.org
(MRS Office of USCCB)*

Legislative Action on Behalf of Mail Order Brides

The “*International Marriage Broker (IMB) Regulation Act of 2003*” was introduced into the 108th Congressional session on July 25, 2003 as Bill # S 1455 by Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and as Bill # HR 2949 by Reps. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Jay Inslee (D-WA). The Act, if made into law, would require IMBs (also known as “*mail-order bride agencies*”) to provide foreign women recruits with critically important information about the marital and criminal histories of their prospective American husbands, as well as about their legal rights and where they could turn for help if they should find themselves in an abusive relationship. These requirements are intended to empower women to make informed choices to protect their safety in such “*brokered*” relationships, which unfortunately in many cases do lead to abuse.

- 1). **Please reply by January 30th** to Jeanne L. Smoot, Public Policy Counsel at justice@tahirih.org with your endorsement of the sign-on. Organizations are also encouraged to write individually to Congress to voice support and share experiences of how clients were affected by this issue. Please circulate the letter to other colleagues. (See pg. 6.)
- 2). **Please reply to** Jeanne L. Smoot, Public Policy Counsel at jeanne@tahirih.org with any information about your organization’s work with abused women, who met their husbands through IMBs.

Gratefully,
Jeanne L. Smoot, Esq.,
Public Policy Counsel
Tahirih Justice Center
6066 Leesburg Pike, Suite 220
Falls Church, VA 22041
phone: (703) 575-0070;
fax: (703) 575-0069





Action

The Letter to Be Submitted by the Tahirih Justice Center to Legislators

Re: International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2003

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations, stand united in our commitment to end violence against women. To this end, we write to express our support for legislation to prevent the abuse of foreign-born women by international marriage brokers (IMBs) and their clients. As you may know, IMBs are businesses that seek to find foreign spouses (usually women) for their American clients. This legislation, sponsored by Senator Cantwell and Representatives Larsen, Inslee and Kirk, would provide to a foreign recruit information about any violent or criminal history of the American client, to enable the recruit to avoid entering into a violent or abusive relationship. Similar legislation was enacted with widespread bipartisan support in Washington State in response to the high-profile murders of several women by husbands they met through IMBs, and Texas and Hawaii have recently followed suit.

In recent years, the IMB industry has grown dramatically. In 1999, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that over 200 such businesses brokered 4,000 to 6,000 marriages in the U.S. per year. With the mushrooming of IMB websites, these numbers have surely increased significantly. As domestic violence service providers

are discovering, abuse is a tragic fact in many relationships brokered by IMBs. It is particularly disturbing that many IMBs explicitly market their services to men seeking domineering relationships with women whom they perceive to be docile and powerless. Some IMBs also systematically ignore the violent histories of their clients, and repeatedly pair violent men with foreign women recruits. The need to provide greater protections for these women from the abuses of the IMB industry was again tragically underscored just this past September in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, when a Ukrainian “mail order bride” was fatally stabbed – possibly in front of the couple’s 4-year-old son – by her American husband in the parking lot of the child’s day care center.

Legislation sponsored by Senator Cantwell and Representative Larsen would:

- Require IMBs, before providing contact information about a foreign woman recruit to a client, to (1) obtain the recruit’s written consent to disclosure of her contact information to any client; (2) require the client to provide responses to questions regarding any prior history of violence, including any criminal activity; (3) provide that client’s information to the recruit; and (4) advise the recruit of her rights under U.S. law should a marriage to an IMB client involve domestic abuse;
- Require a U.S. citizen seeking a foreign fiancé visa to undergo a criminal background check, the results of which would be shared with the prospective foreign spouse;
- Instruct consular officers as well to inform women coming to the U.S. on a fiancé visa of their legal rights should they find themselves in an abusive relationship; and
- Prohibit the filing of applications for visas for more than one foreign fiancé within a one-year period.

We urge you to join us in our commitment to ending the abuse and exploitation of foreign-born women by supporting this legislation. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Tahirih Justice Center
and

Organizations with International or National Focus

Amnesty International USA
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
Church Women United
Civic Research Institute,
Domestic Violence Report
Civic Research Institute, Sexual Assault Report
The Crafts Center
Family Violence Prevention Fund
Feminist Peace Network
GABRIELA Network - U.S.
General Federation of Women’s Clubs
International Labor Rights Fund
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mediart Communications/ Advocacy & Training
Services: Human Rights and Domestic Violence
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for Haitian Rights
National Consumers League
National Council of Women’s Organizations
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States
North American Council for Muslim Women
Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office
Project KESHER
The Salvation Army USA
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Vital Voices Global Partnership
Women for Afghan Women
Women for International Peace and Arbitration
Women’s EDGE
World Organization Against Torture USA

Organizations with Local Focus **Arizona**

Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Phoenix Women Take Back the Night

California

Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)’s Domestic Violence Program
International Institute of the East Bay
La Raza Centro Legal (San Francisco, CA)
Standing Against Global Exploitation (SAGE) Project, Inc.
Shimtu: Korean Domestic Violence Program (Oakland, CA)
The Law Offices of William B. Phillips

Colorado

Hall & Balsamo, P.C. (Denver, CO)

Signatures cont. pg. 7

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Action

Send In Your News!

During 2004 we will highlight what particular congregations, LCWR regions, or collaborative agencies are doing to combat human trafficking.

Your contributions toward that goal are welcome and appreciated!

*Salvatorian Sisters and
Capacitar International Staff*

Gratitude to Our Supporters!

In the last issue we gratefully acknowledged those who, during 2003, supported this newsletter and the *Anti-Trafficking Project of the Salvatorian Sisters and Capacitar International, Inc.*

Mary Sonnleitner and the California Region of our Salvatorian Family (Lay and Priests) have also donated.

*We are very grateful!
Jean Schafer SDS*

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations and collaborating organizations working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please use this e-mail address:
jeansds2000@yahoo.com

Editing and Layout:
Jean Schafer, SDS

Signatures cont.

Connecticut

Alternatives to Family Violence

District of Columbia

Ayuda, Inc.

Capitol Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition

Catholic Immigration Service

Georgia

Catholic Social Services, Immigration Services

Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Heart Haven: Northeast Georgia Council on Domestic Violence

International Women's House

No One Alone

Peace Place, Inc.

Tapestri, Inc.

Hawaii

HA State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Na Loio Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal Center

Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline

Illinois

Women for Humanity

Iowa

Asian Coalition against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Maryland

CASA of Maryland

Migrant and Refugee Cultural Support, Inc.

State Del. Adrienne A. Mandel (District 19 - MD)

Missouri

Missouri Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Whitman-Walker Clinic Legal Services

New Hampshire

Women's Supportive Services

New York

Sex Workers Project - Urban Justice Center

Ohio

Asian American Community Services

Friendship Foundation of American-

Vietnamese, Inc.

Oregon

Asian Family Center (Portland, OR)

Native American Family Healing Circle

OR Coalition Against Domestic/Sexual Violence

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center

Social Action Committee for Women's

Psychological Health

Tennessee

Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Texas

Daya Inc., serving South Asian families in crisis

Domestic Abuse Center, Katy Christian

Ministries

Virginia

Boat People S.O.S

McDonald Dyer, P.C.: Attor.s & Coun.s at Law

What you dream alone remains a dream.

What you dream with others can become reality.

Edward Schillebeeckx

Informative Web Sites: (Each contains information related to human trafficking)

Stop Trafficking!

For back issues go to:

[http://homepage.mac.com/
srjeanschafersds/stoptrafficking/
index.html](http://homepage.mac.com/srjeanschafersds/stoptrafficking/index.html)

*Salvatorian Sisters
Anti-Trafficking Site*
www.sdssisters.org/slavery

*Young Ethiopians Trafficked
(Story from BBC News)*
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/
fr/-/2/hi/africa/3084226.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/3084226.stm)

Tahirih Justice Center
www.tahirih.org

Washington

King Cty. Coalition Against Domestic Violence

N.W. Immigrant Rights Project (Seattle, WA)

NOW - Seattle

Seattle Women in Black

Soroptimist International of Anacortes

Soroptimist International of Coupeville

Soroptimist International of Fidalgo Island

Soroptimist International of Friday Harbor

Soroptimist International of Renton, WA

The Law Offices of Linda S. Mitlyng

University of Washington Women's Center

WA State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The Office of Washington State Senator Jeanne

Kohl-Welles (Seattle, WA)

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Women and Children's Horizons, Inc.