

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



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Co-Sponsored by:

- Sisters of the Divine Savior
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1 This issue highlights international examples of human trafficking and the key role men play in causing or eliminating this human rights abuse.

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Human Trafficking: A Modern Form of Slavery in Brazil

Although slavery officially ended in Brazil at the end of the 19th century, it continues in practice into the 21st century here and in other parts of the world. Next month, a new study concerning human trafficking will begin in four states here in Brazil: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Ceará and Goiás.

The Ministry of Justice has already determined that in all airports and bus terminals there will be phone numbers posted that people can call when they suspect a case of human trafficking. However, various women's groups, such as *Service to Marginalized Women*, have complained that those who administrate airports and bus stations are not given proper orientation. They say it is easier to find a phone number to denounce trafficking of wild animals than of human beings.

The difficulty in implementing a program against human trafficking, of women specifically, is partly due to the nature of the crime, i.e., due to *machismo* in the society. Many men do not feel that women have any rights to begin with, much less women who are engaged in prostitution. This attitude is evident in that very few cases involving trafficked women are investigated, nor are the perpetrators punished.

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The Role of Men and Boys in Gender Equality

(A statement to be submitted to the 48th Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women, March 2004; Drafted by the NGOs: Congregation of Sisters of the Good Shepherd and The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and signed by a number of NGO religious congregations actively working against human trafficking.)

We, NGOs working at a grassroots level for gender equality and engaged in systemic and policy advocacy to promote the dignity and empowerment of all women, affirm the message in *The Beijing Declaration*, adopted by the *4th World Conference on Women* in 1995 that "all governments [should] encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards gender equality" (paragraph 25).

Sadly, we must recognize that eight years after the *Beijing Platform for Action* men continue to hold dominant positions in institutional and social structures that perpetuate massive discrimination against women and girls and that systematically violate their human rights. This discrimination takes a variety of forms, from denial of education to girls and women and the exclusion of women from political participation to the subjection of women and girls to rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other practices of male violence against women.

One of the most severe, devastating, and escalating practices of gender-based violence is the commercial sexual exploitation

of women and girls, including prostitution, sex trafficking, the Internet bride industry, pornography, and sex tourism. While the international community has addressed the role that organized crime, government corruption, and economic policies have played in the global sex industry, even now there is little focus on the crucial role of the demand for prostitution by men and boys in fueling this human rights catastrophe.

Demand by men and boys for prostitution in the wealthy, so-called "receiving countries" and the billions of dollars it generates constitute the primary impetus for the trafficking of women and girls from poor, so-called "sending countries." Demand for prostitution by men in military service has fostered sex industry complexes outside military bases that exploit local women and girls and reward criminal enterprises that traffic in foreign-born women. The demand of men in wealthy countries for sexual and domestic servants has created the Internet bride and sex tourism industries and propelled growing numbers of women and girls

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from poor countries into situations of violence and degradation. The demand for prostitution by United Nations peacekeeping troops and humanitarian aid workers has led to the sexual exploitation of women and girls in dire situations of armed conflict and humanitarian crisis. The feminization of poverty has meant that even in impoverished communities women and girls are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation by local men and boys.

Until those men and boys who perpetrate sexual exploitation as buyers of prostitution are held accountable and non-offending men and boys hold accountable their peers who engage in sexual exploitation, the sex industry will continue to flourish and women and girls, individually and as group, will continue to suffer irreparable harm.

To date, the vast majority of activists and individuals working to stop the sexual exploitation of women and girls are female—a reality that must change if sexual exploitation is to be eradicated.

We are heartened by the fact that some men and boys have taken important leadership roles to stop the sexual exploitation of women and girls. In declaring that “*sexual exploitation and sexual abuse violate universally recognized international legal norms and standards*” and by issuing “*special measures*” to prohibit sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by United Nations staff, *United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan* has set an example of male leadership in this arena. In addition, there are men and boys in each world region who deserve recognition for their important contributions to this movement, among them *Luis Enrique Costa Ramirez, Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Venezuela*, who has pioneered

a peer education program to raise the consciousness of youth in Caracas about the harm of human trafficking; the research of *Swedish social work professor Sven Axel-Mansson* into the demand of Swedish men for prostitution; the advocacy of *Prerana Co-Director Pravin Patkar* on behalf of prostituted women in Mumbai; and the activism of *Equality Now’s Ken Franzblau* against sex tourism by American men in the Philippines. We applaud their efforts and hope that these individual men will serve as role models for other men and boys.

There are many programmatic and institutional ways of promoting gender equality and curtailing the demand for prostitution. We appeal to each government to evaluate its own national plan of action to ensure that it includes practical and on-the-ground activities that ensure the equality of men and women and boys and girls. We urge policy and action in the following areas:

- Educational curricula in the lower grades that raise awareness about the harm of gender stereotypes and sexual objectification of women and girls and that promote gender equality in relationships;
- Educational programs that expose the harm of all forms of pornography and prostitution;
- Training of all institutional players at all levels, including police, prosecutors, judges, and military personnel, to recognize prostituted girls and women as crime victims, not as immoral or criminal;
- Strong and effective prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women, including buyers and sellers of women and girls in

prostitution and related practices of sexual exploitation;

- Fund and disseminate positive and creative public service messages against male violence against women, with the inclusion of popular male figures as spokespersons;
- Acknowledge that the legalization or legitimization of prostitution or any reliance prostitution as a source of national revenue fosters demand for prostitution and increases human trafficking;

The demand for prostitution is a link in the global sex industry chain that can be broken. The Swedish government has reduced prostitution and trafficking by criminalizing prostitution buyers and promoting public education campaigns that hold ordinary Swedish men accountable for purchasing sex. In doing so, Sweden has set an important example for government action worldwide.

The *Trafficking Protocol to the Transnational Convention Against Organized Crime*, which has recently come into force, sets a critically needed international standard by requiring states parties to “*adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures...to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking.*”

Sexual exploitation is not inevitable. If men and women, acting in equal partnerships, join forces to stop the global sex trade in women and girls, we can achieve a world without sexual exploitation - a world in which no man or boy feels entitled to objectify or purchase the body and human dignity of any woman or girl.

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Brazil

Leila Paiva, the coordinator of one governmental initiative called the *Global Program of Prevention of Human Trafficking*, explains that one of

the objectives of her program is to expose the barriers which prevent culprits from being punished. The study being done by this group will include an analysis of cases, which are currently being investigated. This will only be a study of known cases. Paiva commented that the well of violence is probably much deeper because, according to a study that the US State Department did in 2001, Brazil is considered to be one of the principle sources of human trafficking domestically and internationally. Regarding the trafficking of women, Brazil is responsible for 15% of women trafficked in South America, a great majority being from the northern part of the country where there are borders with seven countries.

The majority of the women, who are exported to other countries, are lured by false promises. These women want to better their lives, but find themselves in worse situations than they had at home. They often are held prisoners, are treated poorly, have their documents taken from them, and are in the country illegally, and hence are without recourse. Most of the women are young--between 12 and 18 years old, have little schooling, and are of African descent. Many are trying to support a child, and have suffered some sort of sexual violence. Currently, the "market value" of a Brazilian woman is up to US\$15,000. A study of the *Center of Studies of Children and Adolescents* showed that there are 241 trafficking routes in 20 states of Brazil. More than half of these routes lead to international destinations. The majority of these routes originate in the North and Northeastern states, which are the poorest regions of the country.

An Animal in a Zoo

This is the testimony of L.A.S., a young woman ensnared in the traps of human trafficking:

"I was born in Poranga, Ceará, near the border with Piauí. Like all of the young girls in my city, I began to go out with boys early, at 12 years of age. At age 14, my father kicked me out of the house because of a boy I was dating. My mom didn't say anything, so I just had to leave. I hitchhiked alone to Fortaleza. I had never seen such a huge city. I started to "make a life for" (prostitute) myself, some days earning up to R\$100, while other days I didn't even make enough to eat. At one point, I tried to be a cashier, but one day a former client recognized me, so I got scared and left the job. I later had to return to prostitution.

One day, a taxi driver talked to me and invited me to go to Europe. He said that I was pretty, and I could work as a model. Who knows, maybe I could marry and get my life in order. I was 17 at the time. I was afraid in the beginning, but after talking to him everyday, I finally accepted.

It took him a month to arrange everything for me. He got me a passport, a ticket, and some clothes for cold weather, which he said I would need. I traveled on August 18, 2002 to Spain. He told me that when I arrive, there would be another taxi driver, who speaks Portuguese and would leave me at the house where I would be staying. I had US\$100 and all of my documents with me, along with a lot of fear and many dreams. Three other girls went with me.

I thought I was going to make a lot of money and would be able to help my family. But it was all a lie. After we arrived at the airport, the taxi driver, who was Spanish and didn't speak Portuguese, took our passports. He said that we should trust him because the city was very dangerous. When we arrived at the

place, we saw that it was in fact a house of prostitution. It was only then that we got the truth. The work was from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. everyday except for Monday. The house manager had paid for the airfare, some R\$5,000, which they had not told us in Brazil. If we wanted to leave we could get back our passports, but only after we paid off the manager. Later we discovered that the Spanish taxi driver was connected to a European trafficker, who got us in Fortaleza.

Before leaving Brazil, I suspected prostitution but I never imagined that I would be a prisoner, threatened day and night. At the house, we were slaves. I never got anything, not money, not clothes. I didn't have my documents so I couldn't leave. We were given very little food, and we had to stay up until 5 a.m. every day, trying to get customers. We couldn't even leave the house without being accompanied by "security." One of the girls was threatened with death after she left for a weekend. They thought she went looking for the Brazilian consulate. We never had routine medical exams, much less tests for AIDS.

I fled when I met a Brazilian customer to whom I told my story. It seems that he had contact with other groups because nine days after I told him my story he returned, gave me a false passport and a ticket back to Brazil.

I escaped, but even today I think of my friends there who are being held prisoners, like animals in a zoo."

Source: *Brasil de Fato*,
January 29-February 4, 2004

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Threats Linked to Uncovering of Organ-Trafficking Network Women Religious in Mozambique Report Ambush Attacks

MADRID, Spain, FEB. 2, 2004 (Zenit.org).- Five women religious working in Mozambique say they have received death threats after they uncovered an organ-trafficking scheme that kidnaps and kills children and youths.

The religious -- four from Spain and one from Brazil -- have been missionaries in the Nampula area of this southeastern African nation for 30 years.

According to a report they wrote, they have escaped four ambush attacks, after having reported to the local authorities the *"kidnappings and multiple killings of persons, many times children, victims of an organ trafficking network."*

The report, revealed by the Spanish Catholic agency *Veritas* and seen by ZENIT, was corroborated by a missionary who asked to be identified only as "D.J."

The women religious said they were able to gather information about the grisly trade because their convent is located between the property where the victims were taken, and the airport where the organs were flown out at night.

Since October 2002, dozens of area children and youths, especially street children, have disappeared mysteriously.

According to the report, the victims are taken to the property of a *"white couple,"* where their organs are removed.

The nuns said they have testimonies from individuals who escaped from the place. One of them, a minor, fled and sought refuge in the convent. He then recounted what he had seen and what he was told would be done to him, as well as to other children locked in a house on the property.

The report mentions a young girl, a hitchhiker, who was offered a ride by a man who began to ask her if she suffered from any illness or had ever had tuberculosis. When the driver learned the girl was in good health, he took another road, leading to the couple's property.

"When he had to reduce the car's speed because of the potholes, the young girl took advantage, got out of the car and fled," the report said.

According to the same report, Sister Elilda, from Brazil, did some investigation around the neighborhoods of Nampula and found evidence of foul play. *"She even found a place in the city in which there was a corpse that had the eyes, heart and kidneys removed,"* the report said. Sister Elilda recorded the find with a video.

Despite repeated complaints to the local authorities, no legal proceedings have started.

"There is great corruption in Mozambique after so many years of war," the report said, *"the police, the airport, the local government -- all are implicated."*

The authorities think the real problem is that the Spanish religious and the Catholic Church want to snatch the *"white man's land,"* the report stated.

"The local authority is completely involved through bribes and, despite knowledge of many of these facts, no one has yet been arrested," the report said. Sister Elilda had to go to Maputo, 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) away, to report the situation.

D.J., the corroborating missionary, said that in Maputo, *"no one paid attention to her, only the NGO League for Human Rights, which in turn sought support from Madeira, the attorney general of the republic."*

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Summer Conference

The *Office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS)* of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the *National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW)* are co-hosting a conference designed to provide basic introductory information to parish communities about the anti-human trafficking efforts of the Catholic Church.

The conference, entitled *"STOP: Stop Trafficking of People, Catholic Women against Human Trafficking,"* will take place in Baltimore, MD July 20 - 22, 2004. With a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, MRS will cover the cost of the hotel and meals.

The participants will be responsible for their own transportation. Those who want to learn about human trafficking, who are in a position to educate a large constituency within parishes or a diocese about the issue, and who are committed to attending the full forum are eligible. Participation is limited to 30 women religious and 30 laywomen.

**For an application, contact
Mary Ellen Dougherty SSND at:
MDougherty@usccb.org**



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The Force of Demand in Global Sex Trafficking

S. Helen Petrimoulx SNJM

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Activists, lawyers, survivors of prostitution and researchers at the *'Demand Dynamics' Conference* in Chicago October 16-17, 2003 developed strategies to challenge men's demand for prostitution. The *Captive Daughters* organization sponsored the workshop and provides on their web site (www.captivedaughters.org) an in-depth study of the topic and resources for action.

Learning that organized crime is behind this global trafficking can produce paralysis and strategies with minimal impact. But recognizing that one man at a time fuels this rapidly increasing multi-billion dollar industry, spending his disposable income buying a human being for sex, leads to an awareness that tackling the problem of increasing demand for prostitution in our own countries is where we can have an influence. Examining the escalating demand in the U.S. for women and children for prostitution is a relatively new cutting edge effort in tackling the issue of trafficking. At this Conference, I became convinced this focus is needed in an effective action plan.

I offer a brief summary of some solutions put forth during the conference.

Join the Abolitionist Movement to End Prostitution

There is an indisputable connection between legalizing and decriminalizing prostitution and the expansion of trafficking into these locations. The Netherlands is one example. After prostitution was legalized, there was an expansion of sex tourism in response to a growing demand for younger females and "exotic" women, a term meaning ethnic variety. In contrast, Sweden

passed tougher legislation in 1999. Prostitution in Sweden is a crime of violence against women and only buyers are termed criminals. An 80% reduction in prostitution resulted. It is an indisputable fact that without prostitution there would be no trafficking of women and children into sexual slavery.

In the US strong coalitions must counter the growing movement to legalize or to assign legal zones for prostitution. Coalitions must direct their voices toward municipal, state/provincial and federal governments. Often, organizations combating domestic violence, which bring to the dialogue an understanding of the control issues involved in abuse of women, are overlooked allies in the struggle.

We need to know our opponents' strategies. *"Coyote" (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics)*, a well-funded movement, holds Hooker Conventions in the US where the term "sex worker" was coined, legitimizing prostitution as a valid industry. Their misleading language and veneer of helping women must be exposed.

Initiatives in Education to Reshape Cultural Attitudes

As women religious, with our access to a variety of forums, we can make an impact. Unchallenged practices, such as bachelor parties with gang rapes of prostitutes, fathers condoning the buying of sex as a rite of passage to manhood, and an attitude all too pervasive that "boys will be boys" need to be confronted. These cultural concepts promote the message that some forms of sexual violence against women are acceptable. In some locales, enforcing the arrest and prosecution of buyers of sex is

impeded because judges, lawyers and other influential community leaders are among the johns.

Male panelists at this conference spoke of the need to include men at "Speak Out" gatherings to present alternative male role models. Most powerful was the testimony of a survivor of prostitution, who told how the purchase of her body, and those of all women subjected to prostitution, was a form of destructive sexual violence.

Beginning with education, the *Captive Daughters* organization successfully gathered a coalition of groups to picket outside a travel agency in California that offered sex tourism. The agency closed down.

Information to be posted on the *Captive Daughters* web site.

- *Resources for an Action Plan:* a bibliography of topics on the issue of demand - suggestions for educational materials, speakers, research, position papers etc.
- *Conference – "Adult Entertainment Industry: Gateway to Sex Trafficking"* June 25-26, 2004 in Los Angeles
- Order from Hank Shaw (time4guys@aol.com): Brochure entitled "This World is Rated XX for Violence Against Women and Children" opens to poster size - provides powerful personal stories.



US GLOBAL TRAFFICKING REVIEW 'FAVORS GOVERNMENTS AND IGNORES CIVIL SOCIETY' CHARGE ADVOCATES IN ITALY AND NIGERIA

Women's groups in Italy and Nigeria, which are working together to curb massive and abusive trade in women between the two countries, have criticized a recent US report on global trafficking for exaggerating the efforts of their two governments to crack down on traffickers, and for ignoring the vital role civil society plays.

The report is issued each year by the US State Department, as required under US law (the 2000 *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act*). It ranks the anti-trafficking efforts of all governments except for the US. (See pg. 5.)

The latest report has placed fifteen governments on 'Tier 3,' which means they could face sanctions from the US if they do not take vigorous measures to combat trafficking in the next few months. Italy is given the highest grade (Tier 1) while Nigeria is placed on Tier 2 for making a serious effort.

Many view the annual trafficking review as another example of selective moralizing by the US. But the reaction from Italy and Nigeria suggests that it has become a valuable lobbying tool for many advocates on the front line, and that it could even be stronger.

In a press release, Rosanna Paradiso, director of TAMPEP (the Turin branch of *Transnational AIDS/STD Prevention Among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe*), welcomed the publicity generated by the review. This was echoed by Olabisi Olateru-Olagbegi, Director of the *Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)*, which has campaigned to stop the 'export' of Nigerian women to Italy and provide better protection for those deported from Italy and sent home.

At the same time, both advocates highlighted the importance of civil society in the campaign against trafficking. The report states that it does not seek to analyze '*non-governmental entities*,' but Ms. Paradiso argued that this omission seriously discredits any evaluation and could also discourage the US from funding NGO programs. She urged the Bush Administration to work directly with civil society in countries like Italy and Nigeria, to build 'an interdisciplinary network of organizations, professional training, health and legal services' against trafficking.

TAMPEP also faults the US report for awarding the Italian government its highest rating. The report commends Italy for a 'net increase of 10%' in anti-trafficking projects approved in the past year. In fact, says TAMPEP, funding for NGOs has been severely cut back. Last year, the government only approved 60% of TAMPEP's own budget.

According to TAMPEP, the Italian government is also undermining its own efforts to curb trafficking, by cracking down on illegal immigration. Precisely because they are lured into the sex trade, many trafficking victims do not possess documents and face the constant fear of expulsion. This discourages them from coming forward to testify against traffickers in return for residency rights, as permitted under Article 18 of a progressive Italian law. The TAMPEP statement warns that the 'arbitrary' issuance of Article 18 permits by immigration police, and the absence of standardized procedures for applicants, makes it increasingly difficult for trafficked persons to

benefit from Article 18.

Speaking in Nigeria, Olabisi Olateru-Olagbegi from WOCON said that Nigeria deserved to be ranked in Tier 2 of the US review because the Nigerian National Assembly has passed a new bill on trafficking and the Nigerian president has appointed a special advisor on trafficking. In addition, she said, deported Nigerian women are being treated better on their return and detained for shorter periods.

But Mrs. Olateru-Olagbegi also warned that Nigerian civil society had been rebuffed in its efforts to get stronger protection for victims into the new bill. A witness protection program is still not in place, and civil society has had to take on the task of providing permanent shelters for repatriated victims. This underscores the importance of expanding the US review to cover the efforts of civil society.

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* For a copy of the full TAMPEP press release e-mail Julie Lee at: tampep.italia@libero.it

* To contact WOCON, e-mail wocon95@yahoo.com

* For Erica Williams' reports from Nigeria visit: <http://tinyurl.com/efhl>

* For the 2003 US report on trafficking visit <http://tinyurl.com/g3tv>

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UNANIMA Report on Action against Trafficking

At each board meeting UNANIMA International provides ongoing education for board members regarding some aspect of its NGO work at the United Nations. For this meeting, Catherine Ferguson SNJM, UNANIMA Coordinator, invited Joan Burke, SNDdeNamur who is the NGO representative for her community to discuss with the board how to involve grass roots NGOs in UNANIMA's policy work at the UN. Joan had worked for eleven years in Nigeria prior to coming to New York and she shared from this experience about the work of the *Nigerian Conference of Women Religious (NCWR)* against trafficking.

Nigeria currently has about

20,000 women and children who have been trafficked to Italy. (Several of UNANIMA's member congregations have a presence in Nigeria.) Through the leadership of Florence Nwaonuma SSH, a trained lawyer and full-time chairperson of the anti-trafficking committee of the NCWR, education to raise awareness and prevent trafficking is occurring in rural Nigeria with women religious very active in the campaign. In addition, new laws against trafficking have been put in place, the Italian government has been made aware of the problem, and the Nigerian embassy in Italy has been purged of informants who had assisted the traffickers in retaliating against trafficked women, who were willing

to testify against them.

How do these many accomplishments get to the UN?

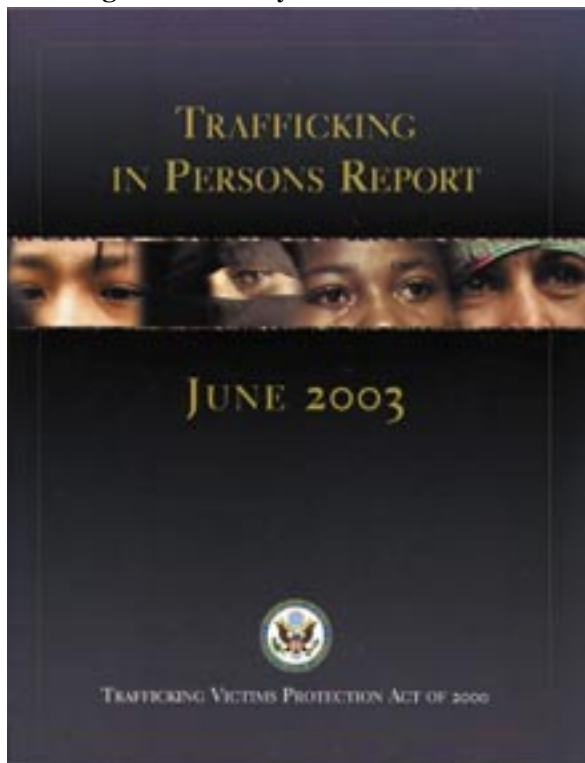
One effective and positive way is through facilitating NGO participation in the CEDAW review process. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) is an international convention

that states, "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures including legislation, to suppress all forms of trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution of women. (Article 6)" Those countries that have signed the convention commit themselves to its terms and also agree to report on their compliance with the convention to a monitoring committee of the UN every four years. The committee meets several times a year, usually January and June, to review these reports and make recommendations to the countries that have prepared the reports to assist in their compliance with the terms of the treaty.

One way NGOs can bring their concerns to the UN is to participate in these reviews by preparing shadow reports and submit them to the committee members several months before the meeting, or by bringing NGO representatives from the country reporting to give an oral statement expressing their concerns. These shadow reports and oral statements are heeded by reviewing committee members. They often form the basis for very specific recommendations to the governments.

Specifically, the next round of reports will take place this summer most likely towards the end of June and will include reports from Equatorial Guinea, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic and Spain with a follow-up report from Argentina.

UNANIMA International is beginning to work with its members in these countries to participate in the preparation of a shadow report that would focus on issues of trafficking. Others who have members in these countries could do the same.



The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report (left) is the most comprehensive worldwide report on the efforts of governments to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons. The US State Department is required to present this report annually as part of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000.

In December 2003 President Bush signed the Trafficking Victims Protection Re-Authorization Act (TVPRA).



Advocacy

How does one find and rescue trafficked women in Germany?

Trafficking in women and children is a major crime of today – its dimensions are unbelievable. It is extremely difficult to give exact figures, as only a small percentage of cases is revealed and reported. Estimates by the Council of Europe assume that in Europe alone 500,000 people become victims of human trafficking each year. Already the illegal profits made in this sector exceed those from drug and arms sales. Within the last ten years, there has been an increase of 400% in the number of traffickers and smugglers in Europe, according to the Council of Europe.

The victims are mostly young women between 18 and 25 years of age, the majority of them originating from Eastern European Countries. They are sold and are forced to work in brothels all across Europe.

A serious problem in this context is the lack of border controls within part of the European Union.

(Those countries which signed the Schengen agreement in 1990 agreed to abandon customs control of persons and goods between their territories. The agreement came into force on March 26, 1995. Up to now Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden ratified and implemented the agreement; Norway and Iceland are associated.)

Distances are short and borders crossed within a few hours, so that the women can be sold from one country to another very easily with little or no risk of being stopped at the border. Once they are in one Schengen-state, traffickers and trafficked can move nearly freely across the continent.

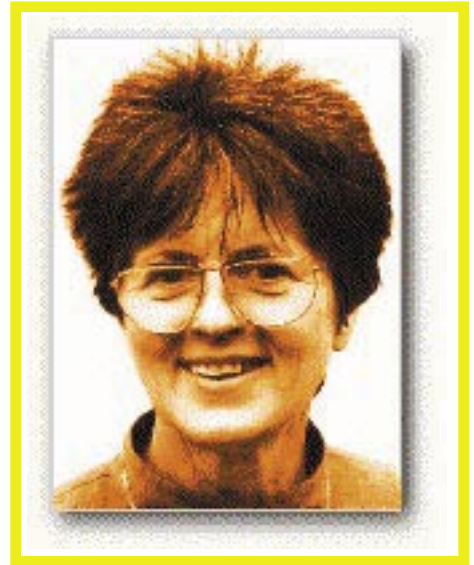
Even within one single country

though, it is not easy to trace victims of trafficking. Here the problems lie within the very nature of the crime. It takes place behind closed doors, is not made public and – most importantly – does not affect most people directly. The police will only find it if they go looking for it. Therefore, they need to be informed and motivated to do raids in addition to all the other work they are heaped with, such as murder, assault, robbery etc. But it is only by those raids in brothels that they will detect women and children who are here illegally and are victims of forced prostitution.

This is also how most women come to *Solwodi (Solidarity with Women in Distress)* – found in police raids and rescued from the brothels. Last year, Solwodi dealt with 208 inquiries concerning human trafficking and took care of nearly 200 victims of trafficking. Caring for these women is a long-term task, beginning by giving them shelter and sometimes ending years later with the verdict in their court case.

Sometimes, however, we get to know about trafficking victims by visits in prisons. There are social workers in the prisons, who know us and draw our attention to it when they suspect cases of trafficking or other special problems the women have. In this way, we have often traced minors who ended up in prison after a police raid and were awaiting their deportation.

In very few, exceptional cases – maybe once or twice a year – a woman gets in contact herself. This happens so rarely because the women are locked up, they are threatened and abused. They do not know the



Lea Ackermann MSOLA (Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa) founded Solwodi in Kenya in 1985 and in Germany in 1988.

language, lack papers and are afraid of being deported instantly when they go to the police. Thus they are in a state of constant fear and hence they rarely break out of the brothels even if they get the chance. They only run away and turn to us if their situation is hopeless and their life is threatened.

Such as Natalia, for example. Her situation had become so unbearable that she jumped out of a 2nd floor window, hands tied. She ran through the forest for the whole night, searching for a place to hide. Finally a woman found her on a road and took her to the police station from where she was given over to our custody. However, very few women can escape like that.

It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that the police continue the raids, putting pressure on the traffickers and rescuing the victims. It is generally the only chance for the abused women to escape. NGOs like Solwodi cannot make these rescues, but we can – and we do – take care of women when they are brought to



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Germany

us. Solwodi helps them find their way back into a normal life.

Considering that the police and the justice system are the ones to fight trafficking and traffickers, it is vital that they are informed about the special situation of the victims, their problems and their needs. Traumatized as these women are, one needs to know how to deal with them in order to get clear information about the perpetrators. There is also still a vast amount of prejudice as to the women's reasons for coming here, a lack of understanding regarding their economic situation and the tricks which have been played on them to lure them to Germany. So that is another big part of Solwodi's work – to prepare and implement training and information programs for police, judges and public prosecutors who deal with victims of human trafficking.

As this crime is hardly ever reported to the police, Solwodi is also campaigning to raise awareness among the customers of prostitutes. It is our goal to make them watch out for signs of force and to report involuntary prostitution to the police.

As prostitution as such is legal in Germany, men do not risk punishment themselves, but it is still not easy to have them speak out. Yet, we think that constant campaigning and awareness raising will have an effect in the long run. Only if the customers, who provide the demand, watch out and stay away, will forced prostitution and trafficking finally die out.

Sr. Lea Ackermann

SOLWODI^{e.V.}: Solidarity with Women in Distress

There are 8 counselling offices and shelters across Germany that support migrant women who have come into difficulty. Those are women who came to Germany through work-migration, sex-tourism, dubious marriage agencies or as victims of trafficking. Solwodi also helps victims of violence in the family or forced marriage.

SOLWODI provides the following:

- explaining to these women their options for the future;
 - making negotiations with immigration and other authorities;
 - visiting women in prison (held in deportation custody);
 - assisting in the search for an apartment or other form of shelter;
 - arranging adult literacy or German courses and suitable job training placements;
 - supporting witnesses in trials; counseling victims of trafficking;
 - supporting in the process of returning to their country of origin.
- SOLWODI also carries out a reintegration project in the home country of some of the victims. SOLWODI conducts public action:
- creating awareness of the problem with the help of the media and lectures;
 - observing trials against traffickers and husbands;
 - requesting improvements of the legal situation;
 - lobbying politicians and authorities;
 - providing training programs for occupational groups; etc.

National Trafficking in Persons Conference on Modern-Day Slavery



Victims of Trafficking Initiative presents the second annual conference on the Global, National, and Local Perspectives for Prevention, Protection and Prosecution.

March 3 - 5, 2004 Dallas, TX

Mosaic Family Services, Inc. through funding from the *Office of Refugee Resettlement* is sponsoring the Conference. The Office of the U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Texas provided additional funding.

The Conference is supported by:

- U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Texas
- Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services
- Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Dallas Police Department
- Texas Department of Human Services, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
- Victims of Trafficking Initiative

Speakers include: Kevin Bales, Author of *Disposable People*; Laura Lederer, U.S. Department of State. The conference will focus on how to respond from three perspectives: law enforcement, social services, and legal representation. Topics will include: civil and federal remedies in trafficking cases, medical and psychological issues of victims; and helping survivors become self-sufficient. CEU's for social workers and counselors, TECLEOSE credits for attending law enforcement officials, and MCLE credits for attorneys.

For more information, contact Amanda Johnston Tel.: (214) 821-5393
Email: trafficking@mosaicsservices.org
Website: www.mosaicsservices.org
Registration: \$190



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What Are Congregations Doing re. Anti-Human Trafficking?

A questionnaire was sent to members of LCWR throughout the USA. What follows is a summary of the responses returned. We offer these responses in solidarity with the many congregations working against trafficking in Eastern/Western Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. *SolWoDi*, an organization working in Germany and founded by a member of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, is featured in this issue.

Nearly 30 congregations (from ME, VT, NY, MD, PA, VA, OH, IN, WI, MN, TX, AZ, CA, OR, WA) responded. The responses indicated much interest in anti-trafficking with a desire to learn more in order to take effective action. Most congregations seem to be in the awareness-raising stage. Some congregations indicated they are actively working on other justice issues. Thus, it is important to realize the interconnections between human trafficking and these injustices.

How did congregations become interested in the issue/called to be involved in countering human trafficking?

Most congregations indicated how this mission focus is inherently connected to their charism and hence was the focus of chapter discussion and direction setting. The experiences of the members, the work of their justice and peace committees, and the involvement in collaborative networks also influenced the

decision to commit resources to anti-trafficking.

What are these congregations doing/planning to do?

Most congregations have undertaken well-planned means of informing their members, collaborators and associates of the issue through written materials, visual aids, speakers, study groups, newsletters and prayer services. Some congregations highlighted efforts of members in underdeveloped countries to take actions to prevent trafficking by the empowerment of women and girls. Other congregations have taken action in the USA to expose trafficking venues, such as sex tourism businesses and chain stores that utilize unjust labor practices among migrants.

What have these congregations found to be effective?

Effective efforts were: those that kept the relationship between human trafficking and its underlying causes (e.g., patriarchy, globalization, and the feminization of poverty) before the members; and those that provided ways to network with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

What do congregations think women religious ought to focus on?

- **Within the congregation** members should be alert, given the interrelationship of economic injustice, patriarchy and the growth of trafficking, to ways to resist these dynamics. They should match their response with the charismatic grace that empowers the members and expresses the authenticity of their charism. They should utilize information from academic sources, study the mentality of the perpetrators, and see the potential for action within each sub-population of the membership, including that of the senior members.
- **Within impoverished areas (“mission” countries)** members should utilize every possible strategy to prevent trafficking of women and children. These include teaching self-esteem, basic education, and job skills to women and girls, as well as by using creative educational methods for both sexes that break cultural mores that perpetuate any form of violence used by men against women.
- **Within the USA** members should work for justice for immigrants, provide border vigilance, expose companies that exploit migrants or women, especially those that use women and girls sexually for profit (mail order bride, sex tourism, massage parlors, escort services, etc.). Several congregations highlighted the need to involve men in these efforts, since demand for sexual exploitation of women by men fuels the trafficking industry more than anything else.

What resources could/should congregations offer to organizations involved in anti-human trafficking?

The responses indicated a conviction that women religious have



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Survey

the *body of Catholic social teaching*, the accumulation of “*know-how*” in process thinking/planning, the *power of owned/sponsored institutions* (providing health care, social and legal advocacy services, and education) at their disposal. These are **rich resources** that are too often taken for granted.

In addition, religious could offer safe housing for victims of trafficking. Religious also have a vast number of people connections, both through networking activities, as well as through the alums of various ministries. Examples given included: contacting former students in key business positions, in law enforcement and legal venues, in parishes. Returned and current missionaries are an important means for communicating with women who do not speak English, but need help to understand the potential dangers they face in leaving their home countries seeking work.

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

What support do congregations think would be helpful for them?

Small congregations stated that they needed to learn from larger congregations, as well as collaborate with them. Many congregations stated that the relationship of trafficking to the larger injustices (patriarchy, poverty, etc.) must be understood and communicated as broadly as possible. Thus, supporting organizations able to do that is vital. The role of NGOs, the USCCB Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Trafficking, and UNANIMA in helping all women religious know what action steps to take was highlighted as very supportive.

In Conclusion:

Collaboration and networking with anti-trafficking groups is vital. The significance of small steps taken by individual members and the more public corporate actions taken as congregations and networks is also vital. Women religious believe that both of these dimensions contribute significantly to pushing society forward toward a **profound paradigm shift** in world consciousness that will eventually value women and children as full persons, with equal rights and opportunities.

We are grateful to all who took the time to respond. We invite any congregation to inform Stop Trafficking readers of efforts its members are making in the work against human trafficking.

Jean Schafer SDS

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>

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

News From Brazil
<http://www.oneworld.org/sejup>

ZENIT News Services
<http://www.zenit.org/>
(To receive a free subscription by e-mail, go to:
<http://www.zenit.org/english/subscribe.html>)

Captive Daughters
www.captivedaughters.org

UNANIMA
www.unanima.org

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*