

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



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This issue highlights how human trafficking affects South Asia and continues to endanger victims of the recent tsunami.

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Sex Rings Targeting Tsunami Orphans

Text messages offering to sell hundreds of Indonesian orphans into sexual slavery are fueling fears that pedophile rings are prowling the tsunami-ravaged region.

“Three hundred orphans aged 3-10 years from Aceh for adoption. No fee. State age and sex of child required,” read a message on the cell phone of a UNICEF worker in Malaysia recently, who immediately notified Malaysian police.

“They either have 300 orphans for sale or can seize them according to orders received,” a UNICEF spokesperson said.

Alarmed by the report, Indonesian Social Affairs Minister Bachtiar Chamsyah immediately imposed an adoption ban to prevent child trafficking.

Social workers in Aceh and across the island of Sumatra began registering children, and police patrolling the teeming shelters were ordered to be on the lookout for Europeans posing as relief workers.

“This is a situation that lends itself to this kind of exploitation,” said Carol Bellamy, executive director of UNICEF. Some are already terming this the “tsunami generation.”

About 35,000 Aceh children lost either one or both parents to the killer waves on Dec. 26, making them prime targets for those who supply children to south Asia’s burgeoning brothels.

“In times of natural disasters or

war, children become even more vulnerable,” said Karren Flanagan of the Australian group Child Wise, which fights against child sex tourism. “It doesn’t surprise us at all that these things are starting to happen.”

In addition to sexual predators, impoverished Indians and Sri Lankans have also been trying to pass off orphaned children as their own so they can collect relief aid, officials said. A man who claimed to be an orphaned boy’s uncle was unmasked as a fraud when the child refused to leave a shelter with him.

Efforts to Counter Child Trafficking after the South Asian Tsunami

INDONESIA: The government is barring anyone from taking children in Aceh province out of the country.

INDIA: The country will not relax its strict rules on adoption, despite the thousands orphaned by the tsunami. Tamil Nadu state is building an orphanage and will open a bank account in each child’s name with a deposit of \$11,000.

THAILAND: The country, long criticized for not doing enough to prevent trafficking, has taken no special measures, but Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai said it was working with hospitals to prevent gangs from taking advantage of the situation.

Co-Sponsored by:

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

SRI LANKA: Foreign adoptive parents are not desired in Sri Lanka, which has strict rules on adoption.

UNICEF is working with local groups to set up a program to match orphans with grieving parents.

Tsunami Victims Prey to Criminals

Thieves, rapists, kidnappers and hoaxers are preying on tsunami survivors and families of victims in Asian refugee camps and hospitals and in the home countries of European tourists hit by the wave.

Reports and warnings came in of criminals taking advantage of the chaos to rape survivors in Sri Lanka or plunder the homes of European tourists reported missing.

In stark contrast to a worldwide outpouring of humanitarian aid in response to the Dec. 26 tsunami, a women’s group in Sri Lanka said rapists were preying on homeless survivors. “We have received reports of incidents of rape, gang rape, molestation and physical abuse of women and girls in the course of unsupervised rescue operations and while resident in temporary shelters,” the Women and Media Collective group said.

Save the Children warned that youngsters orphaned by the tsunami were vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

In Thailand thieves disguised as police and rescue workers have looted luggage and hotel safes near a beach, where the tsunami killed up to 3,000 people.



Awareness

Global Picture of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The *World AIDS Epidemic Update 2004* was published at the close of 2004 by UNAIDS, which is the coordinating body among UN agencies set up to address the pandemic. The study gives the following figures on the current global situation:

Number living with HIV in 2004

Total: 39.4 million;
Adults: 37.2 million;
Women: 17.6 million;
Children: under 15 years 2.2 million

Newly infected HIV cases in 2004

Total: 4.9 million;
Adults: 4.3 million;
Children under 15 years: 640,000

AIDS deaths in 2004

Total: 3.1 million;
Adults: 2.6 million;
Children under 15 years: 510,000

Virtually every region, including sub-Saharan Africa, has several countries where the epidemic is still at a low level or at an early enough stage to be held in check by effective action. This calls for programs that can thwart the spread of HIV among the most vulnerable population groups. But in many countries, inadequate resources and a failure of political will and leadership still bars the way—especially where HIV has established footholds among marginalized and stigmatized population groups such as women in the sex trade, drug injectors, and men who have sex with men. Unless reticence is rapidly replaced with pragmatic and forward-looking approaches, HIV will spread more extensively in many countries that until now have escaped with only minor epidemics.

The AIDS epidemic is affecting women and girls in increasing numbers. Globally, just under half of all people living with HIV are female. Women and girls make up almost

57% of all people infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, where a striking 76% of young people (aged 15–24 years) living with HIV are female. In most other regions, women and girls represent an increasing proportion of people living with HIV, compared with five years ago, and the proportion is continuing to grow, particularly in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America.

These trends point to serious gaps in the AIDS response. Services that can protect women against HIV must be expanded. The higher incidence among girls and women is often the result of a lack of education, high-risk behavior, unequal respect for women's rights, insufficient access to preventative options, non-disclosure of partner status, and sexual violence. Women and girls need more information about AIDS. A recent UNICEF survey found that up to 50% of young women in high-prevalence countries did not know the basic facts about AIDS. The vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection stems not simply from ignorance, but from their pervasive disempowerment. Most women around the world become HIV-infected through their partner's high-risk behavior, over which they wield little if any control. The plight of women and children in the face of AIDS underlines the need for realistic strategies that address the interplay between inequality—particularly gender inequality—and HIV.

The *Global Coalition on Women and AIDS* was launched by UNAIDS in early 2004 to highlight the effects of AIDS on women and girls and to stimulate effective action to reduce that impact. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS is not a new orga-

nization but a movement of people, networks and organizations supported by activists, leaders, government representatives, community workers, and celebrities. Its work is focused on the following areas:

- HIV infection among adolescent girls;
- violence against women;
- the property and inheritance rights of women and girls;
- equal access by women and girls to care and treatment;
- improved community-based care, with a special focus on women and girls; and
- on-going efforts towards universal education for girls.

HIV Increasingly Striking Women In Asia

A report from Bangkok, Thailand in November 2004 indicated that women in East Asia are contracting HIV at a faster rate than in the rest of the world, and there's a worrying new trend in Thailand — men who have visited prostitutes are increasingly passing on the infection to their wives, the UN reported.

In many parts of the world, especially in Asia, more women than men are getting the disease because it has spread beyond the brothels where most infections occurred 12 years ago, said the latest global HIV status report.

Women have also seen higher rates of infection than men because it is easier for them to get HIV -- the virus that causes AIDS -- through heterosexual intercourse.

Some 2.3 million out of the 8.2 million people currently living with HIV in Asia are women -- an increase of 56 percent since 2002. Nearly 50 percent of the 39.4 million people infected with HIV worldwide are women, according to the report. The epidemic has claimed about 540,000 lives in Asia so far in 2004.



Awareness

Human Traffickers Targeting Young Girls

An article from the Indo-Asian News Service, appearing just two weeks before the tsunami hit, reported that almost a fourth of the 266,847 children who went missing in India between 1996 and 2004 remain untraced and experts believe they may have been forced into commercial sex.

Human traffickers are increasingly targeting young girls, who are preferred by many men in the belief that sex with them is safe because they are less likely to have contracted sexually transmitted diseases.

The "Action Research on Trafficking in Women and Children 2002-03 Report" indicated that notions, such as having sex with virgins could cure HIV/AIDS, fuelled the demand for young girls in the sex trade. Governments of many developing countries, with a view to encouraging tourism, turn a blind eye to this problem.

The report, jointly sponsored by the *National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)*, *UNIFEM* and *Institute of Social Sciences*, also established a clear link between missing people and trafficked children.

The report found that of the 266,847 children reported missing between 1996-2004, as many as 66,024 were still untraced and suggested that they might have been forced into commercial sex. It is a fact that out of the large number of women and children reported missing every year, many never return. Many a time, during rescue operations in red light areas, many children and women who are rescued turn out to be those who were earlier reported missing elsewhere.

Among 510 trafficked children interviewed for the study, 39.6 percent said they were trafficked by their own relatives.

The study, which also included traffickers as respondents, quoted them as saying that a maximum of Rs.20,000 was paid to procure virgin girls.

A huge majority (92.8 percent) of the traffickers interviewed said the parents or guardians received payment for the girls.

Even clients visiting brothels (39.2 percent of those interviewed) admitted that their preference was for young girls, with the highest preference being for virgin girls. The report called on law enforcement agencies and health workers to take note.

In addition to sexual exploitation, trafficked children were also used for illegal adoptions, illegal organ transplants and false marriages.

The majority of these children came from poor families.

<http://www.newkerala.com/news-daily/news/features.php?action=fullnews&id=47026>

South Asia Child Sex Trade, Traffic Booming

Slavery is booming in South Asia, with hundreds of thousands of women and children being trafficked and sold or forced into the sex trade or domestic service each year, UNICEF (on news and web sites) warned in September 2004.

Conflicts in countries like Afghanistan and Nepal are compounding matters by displacing thousands of young people, who go in search of safety and work -- only to be lured or pushed into the sex trade.

Dr. Sadig Rasheed, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, said at a meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka that

around 500,000 women and children are being trafficked each year in Asia, with most of them in South Asia. That compares to a worldwide figure of 1.2 million.

"We have been working with the hotel industry, with the tour operating industry ... to look at ways they can better protect children," said Carmen Melania Madrinan, executive director of ECPAT -- End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes.

(Reuters-Colombo, SL)

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/nm/20040929/wl_

Theater *cont. from pg. 4*

Recovery and reintegration is also essential in helping children who have been trafficked and exploited. For them it is an enormous challenge to re-enter society after months, if not years, away from home in debasing and sometimes life-threatening conditions. UNICEF and its partners support the training of law enforcers, health professionals, social workers and teachers to address the needs of trafficked children. It also supports the development of a comprehensive referral system for victims of exploitation and trafficking.



Advocacy

Youth Fight Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

Dewi (not real names) and her younger sister, Yani, rehearse a play in the backroom of a nondescript house in Surakarta, a city of one million inhabitants located in Central Java, Indonesia. The play, *Eka*, is about a girl abducted and sold into the sex trade. The sisters and nine of their teenage friends wrote and perform the play. *"It is based on our real life,"* says Dewi, a slight 21-year-old dressed in a white T-shirt and long denim dress. *"Eka was stolen from her village by a pimp and sold to one of his customers. When she refused to have sex with him Eka was raped. In the play, one of Eka's friends tries to help by getting a guardian angel to rescue her."*

The theatre piece was the idea of Kakak, a non-governmental organization partnering with UNICEF in Surakarta. *"Theatre helps to build confidence and is an effective way of campaigning against commercial sexual exploitation of children,"* said Emmy Smith, one of the group's co-founders. Kakak, which means elder sibling in Indonesian, provides refuge, counselling and hope for children involved in the sex industry. Although girls represent the majority of the victims, many boys are also involved in prostitution. At present, Kakak assists 150 female and male victims of sexual exploitation through its program and, with support from the local police and community, has successfully removed nine of these children from the sex industry, a significant achievement.

"To cope with the horrible life they have to endure, ninety per cent of the girls and boys involved in prostitution become drug addicts," said Smith. *"Stigma, poor education, few employment opportunities and the lack of*

reintegration services are other reasons why it's difficult to get girls out. It took us three years to rescue Dewi and Yani."

Yani was 15 when her boyfriend lured her away from home with false promises of a lucrative job and a chance to continue her education. After a long journey by car to an unknown destination, she was raped by a middle-aged Indonesian man who beat her unconscious after she refused his advances. She was immediately sold to a brothel where she was guarded day and night. Dewi's story is very similar.

Intimidated, ashamed and deeply disturbed, Yani and Dewi became two of the million of young girls and boys that go into the multi-billion-dollar sex trade across the globe.

"My pimp stopped giving me money and just supplied me with drugs," says Dewi. *"I got worse and worse. I lived from hotel room to hotel room, and worked wherever a client wanted me, here in Surakarta, Yogyakarta or Jakarta."*

When Kakak tried to rescue the girls, they initially hid from the organization. *"We were scared of them and of what the pimp would do if he found out they were helping us,"* says Dewi, *"But then I got sick. I thought I had AIDS and was really scared so I went back home to my mother."* As it turns out, Dewi did not have AIDS. She told her mother what had happened to her. She continued working as a sex worker, although less frequently. She knew she wanted out and wanted to stop her drug use. So did her sister Yani, and they decided to turn to Kakak for help.

Finally, supported by their mother and by Kakak, both sisters successfully left the sex industry. Dewi is now back

in school and is learning to become a counsellor for children who have been exploited. Yani wants to start her own youth organization. Eka has been their most widely performed play. They have acted for donor governments, local government, politicians and at art festivals in Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

Unfortunately, happy endings like theirs are rare. For each girl rescued, millions of others remain trapped in prostitution and millions more enter the sex industry each year.

In Indonesia, it is estimated that 100,000 children and women are trafficked each year. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is on the rise, and one third of the sex workers are under 18 years old. The underlying causes of child trafficking include poverty and lack of economic opportunities for young people, the low status of girls, high demand for commercial sex, weak law enforcement, discrimination and conflict. Surveys on trafficking and sexual exploitation conducted in East Asia, including in Indonesia, show that trafficking of children is lucrative, well organized and linked to criminal activity and corruption. It is also transnational, often hidden and therefore hard to combat.

UNICEF works with the Government of Indonesia and local organizations like Kakak, to combat the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children by promoting access to education; lobbying for laws requiring children to stay in school until the age of 16 and providing, in partnership with the tourism industry, vocational training for dropouts, children living on the street, and other youths at risk of exploitation.



Advocacy

In Wake of Asian Tsunami, Sri Lankan Ex-Slave and Anti-Slavery Activists Call for Measures to Prevent Child Slavery

Beatrice Fernando, a Sri Lankan survivor of slavery, joined with the *American Anti-Slavery Group* to call for increased vigilance against child trafficking in the wake of the recent tsunami in Southeast Asia.

"So many children are at risk," Fernando said. *"The governments of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, and India need to act now to prevent traffickers from exploiting the crisis."*

According to recent reports (Newindpress, Reuters), one of the devastating consequences of the recent tsunami in Southeast Asia is an increased risk of children being abducted into slavery.

"Even before the tsunami hit, human trafficking was rampant in the region," noted Anti-Slavery Group associate director Jesse Sage. *"But now thousands of children are homeless, displaced, and orphaned – easy tar-*

gets for crime rings that profit from trafficking in human beings."

Fernando, who as a young woman was trafficked from Sri Lanka to Lebanon, ended up enslaved, forced to endure severe beatings and work without pay. She recently published an autobiography, *In Contempt of Fate*, which addresses the problem of human trafficking.

"Sri Lankans are like one big family," Fernando explained. *"Even a stranger you meet on the street, you call 'auntie' or 'uncle.' So children are naturally open to strangers. We must make sure that orphaned children are not falling prey to traffickers planning to sell them into slavery. I have felt that pain and barely survived to return to my family. I cannot imagine the horror of these children, who have no families left to comfort them."*

Sage hailed Fernando's courage in speaking out about her own experience. *"Beatrice's experience reminds us that slavery is not history. Today, we must remain vigilant."*

The Anti-Slavery Group's latest action alert to its 40,000 members includes a call on regional governments to take concrete steps to reduce the potential for abductions, including: effectively monitoring borders, alerting displaced persons about the methods used by traffickers, registering children taking shelter in refugee camps and orphanages, and offering a hotline for people who suspect traffickers operating in their communities.

"Governments and relief workers are struggling to cope with the tsunami's devastating destruction," Fernando said. *"I hope they can prevent human traffickers from making the situation worse."*

Commerical Sexual Exploitation: Call for Legal Reform in India and Indonesia

ECPAT International and Plan International wrapped up their series of *National Consultations on Legal Reform to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children* with meetings in India on November 29th and Indonesia on December 6th. Previously, consultations were also held in Bangladesh and Nepal.

The New Delhi seminar, attended by child rights activists from government agencies and civil society organizations, discussed the *"Report on Laws and Legal Procedures Concerning the Commercial Sexual Exploita-*

tion of Children in India". The report recommends that child-protection laws in India be overhauled to remove loopholes and ambiguities if the laws are to be effective tools for safeguarding children against commercial sexual exploitation.

Participants at the consultation agreed with the legal report's findings that a major obstacle to protecting children in India stemmed from piecemeal laws that police and law officers find difficult to implement because of inadequate or inconsistent procedures to support implementation.

As advocated in the report, participants agreed that India's child protection laws need to be clarified so that violations are well defined and clear guidance is offered on procedures to implement the laws. Police and legal officers would then be better able to enforce child-protection measures, including guaranteeing that children involved in legal proceedings benefit from formalized child-friendly legal procedures and receive legal assistance and appropriate social services.

Following the India consultation, the final meeting in this series was held in Jakarta, where the *Report on Exploitation* pg. 6



Action

This issue of *Stop Trafficking* is dedicated to:

- all those victims of trafficking, who may also have been lost in the tsunami, and will forever remain lost and unclaimed because their loved ones do not know they had been trafficked into South Asia; and
- all those social service agencies, rescue workers, and NGOs who work to assure that tsunami survivors do not become victimized yet again by the cruelty of traffickers.

Exploitation *cont. from pg. 5*

Laws and Legal Procedures Concerning the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Indonesia was presented for discussion. The report was prepared in collaboration between ECPAT International and legal consultants Antarini Arna and Mattias Bryneson.

The report highlights concerns about inconsistencies and gaps in Indonesian law, especially with regard to the treatment and protection of children. For example, prostitution is one of the main forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Indonesia. But the law does not

treat children who are sexually exploited in the streets or brothels as victims of a crime. Instead, they are more likely to be treated as criminals. The Criminal Code contains no provisions relating to commercial sexual transactions with a child even as it allows for punishment of children forced into street prostitution, either for offenses against public order or as vagrants.

Yet, people who pay for sex with a child and those who facilitate this action commonly escape punishment due to non-explicit laws and weak enforcement of existing laws on pimping.

A critical factor is limited awareness of sexual exploitation of children as a crime. In particular, the legal system is lacking in specialist practitioners trained especially on these issues.

Within the report, police, prosecutors and judges all say they need higher-quality training on child rights issues, sexual violence against children and the country's two-year-old *Child Protection Act*, which is rarely used as intended because many legal officers do not fully understand the Act's provisions and how to implement them.

Overall, the report calls for stronger laws and articulated regulations and procedures to help law enforcement and legal officers take tougher action against all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children. It also recommends reforms to address ambiguities about the definition of a child under Indonesian law, stronger measures to ensure the identity and age of all children can be properly established, further measures to ensure child-friendly legal procedures are more widely adopted within the legal system, and the establishment of special units and courts for cases involving children.

Ask Governments to Protect Tsunami Victims

According to recent reports, one of the devastating consequences of the recent tsunami in Southeast Asia is an increased risk of children being abducted into slavery.

Even before the tsunami hit, human trafficking was rampant in the region. But now thousands of children are homeless, displaced, and orphaned - easy targets for crime rings that profit from trafficking in human beings.

Please take a moment to encourage governments in the region to do whatever they can to prevent traffickers from exploiting the current crisis.

You may take action either by contacting the various ambassadors to the U.S.:

Amb. Devinda R. Subasinghe
(Sri Lanka),

Amb. Kasit Piromya
(Thailand),

Amb. Ronen Sen
(India),

Amb. Soemadi D.M. Brotodiningrator
(Indonesia).

or via the *American Anti-Slavery Group* website:

<http://gao.org/campaign/tsunami/u3kseu2h57ndn7>

The **American Anti-Slavery Group (AASG)** is dedicated to abolishing modern-day slavery worldwide.

1-800-884-0719
198 Tremont St., #421
Boston, MA 02116
info@iabolish.com



Action June Conference Announced

The Office of Migration and Refugee Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB MRS) will host a strategy conference for women religious in June 2005.

Mary Ellen Doherty SSND, who is responsible for the anti-trafficking efforts of the MRS, explained that the exact place and date of the conference has not been fully decided, but that it would probably be held in Baltimore around June 14-16, 2005.

The Conference will be open to members of those congregations that have taken a corporate stance against human trafficking and are resolved in their commitment to work against trafficking.

Sister Dougherty explained, "We would like to see teams of three mem-

bers attend from each of the congregation represented, so that they can plan realistically, as well as discover practical ways to collaborate with other congregations in their geographic area of the United States.

Until now we have been conducting educational conferences. Now it is time to put our expertise and resources to the task of effective action."

"This will not be a conference for those who are just getting started, but for those who understand the complexities of trafficking and want to make a significant impact." she said.

Congregational leaders should write to Jean Schafer SDS (jeansds2000@yahoo.com) to indicate they have members interested in participating.

Thank You

We wish to gratefully acknowledge those who donated toward the Salvatorian Sisters Anti-Human Trafficking Project during December 2004:

- Gerrie and Jim Frank
Hartland, WI
- Sisters of the Divine Compassion
White Plains, NY
- Sisters/Associates of the
Dominican West Chapter of the
Adrian Dominicans
Phoenix, AZ
- Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Milwaukee, WI
- Gerald and Mary Beth Biese
Eden Prairie, MN
- Rosceil Germain
New Richmond, WI

Informative Web Sites:

(Each contains information
related to human trafficking)

Tsunami abuse articles

partially excerpted from:

[http://www.nydailynews.com/
front/story/268322p-229792c.
html](http://www.nydailynews.com/front/story/268322p-229792c.html) and

[http://www.alertnet.org/the-
news/newsdesk/L03717820.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/the-news/newsdesk/L03717820.htm)

ECPAT

<http://www.ecpat.net>

[http://www.crin.org/resources/
infoDetail.asp?ID=4934](http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=4934) [India]

[http://www.crin.org/resources/
infoDetail.asp?ID=4933](http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=4933)
[Indonesia]

UNICEF

[http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/
povertyfeat_indonesia.html](http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/povertyfeat_indonesia.html)

UNAIDS

<http://womenandaids.unaids.org>.

Cfr. <http://www.unaids.org/wad2004/report.html> to access
the document "AIDS EPIDEMIC UPDATE 2004"
(with links for the text in English, French, Spanish and Russian).

Toll-Free Hotline: (Trafficking Information and Referral)

1.888.3737.888

Stop Trafficking!

is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

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

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