

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

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Action

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This issue highlights the effects of trafficking on indigenous peoples.

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Trafficking of Indigenous Peoples

“Labor exploitation and discrimination affect indigenous men and women differently, and gender is often an additional cause of discrimination against indigenous women. Many indigenous women:

- Have less access to education and training at all levels;
- Are more affected by unemployment and under-employment;
- Are more often involved in non-remunerated work;
- Receive less pay for equal work;
- Have less access to material goods and formal recognition needed to develop their occupation or to obtain access to employment;
- Have less access to administrative and leadership positions;
- Experience worse conditions of work, for example related to working hours and occupational safety and health;
- Are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and harassment and trafficking, as they often have to seek employment far away from their communities;
- Are limited by discriminatory cultural practices, which, for example inhibit the education of the girl-child or prevent women from inheriting land or participating in decision-making processes.” (*Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Rights in Practice: A Guide to ILO Convention No. 169*” pg. 154)

Sex Trafficking of American Indian Women and Girls in Minnesota

(Ed. Note: Suzanne Koeplinger, Executive Director of the *Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center* (MIWRC) wrote of the plight of Native American women and girls. Material was excerpted from her comprehensive and referenced article found in the *Univ. of St. Thomas Law Journal* 6 (1): 129-137, (2008) and available at: <http://www.stthomas.edu/law/programs/journal/Vol6num1.html>
The views represented in the article are those of the author.)

According to the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area represents one of the fifteen worst metropolitan areas for sex trafficking in the country. It also houses the second largest urban Native American community in the country. As more people focused their attention on the growing problem of international human trafficking and its impact on the Twin Cities Metro area, the MIWRC and its partners, began seeing evidence of disproportionately high rates of sex trafficking in Native American communities.

Environmental factors that lead to vulnerability to predators include high rates of poverty, lack of education, lack of employment opportunity, social normalization of violence against women, fractured social structure, and high rates of demand for prostituted women and increasingly younger children. The

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State Department has identified these factors as indicators of vulnerability to traffickers internationally, and many of these disparities exist on Minnesota's Native American reservations. In urban Native American communities, disproportionately high rates of single female head-of-households in poverty, rates of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and rates of physical violence suffered during a sexual assault demonstrate significant environmental risk factors for Native American women. MIWRC saw high numbers of young Native females, many of them homeless or runaways, who report that they exchanged sex for shelter, for food, or for drugs — 'survival sex'. Criminal networks, gangs, and occasionally, family members have forced females as young as eight years old into prostitution. Mounting evidence from law enforcement, including the Duluth Police Department, also indicates that young Native females are being taken to the Port of Duluth to be prostituted.

The indicators of sexual violence rates against Native American women are a significant concern. High rates of overall sexual violence and the resulting trauma forecast a vulnerability to predatory behaviors. The *Amnesty International Report, 'Maze of Injustice'*, calls sexual violence against Native American women a human rights violation. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that violent crime victimization among Native American females is 2.5 times the rate for all females. Seven of every one thousand Native American women are sexually assaulted compared to four of every one thousand Black American women. The accuracy of these statistics is

questionable due to the fact that many Native women do not report assaults ...due to the belief that authorities will not investigate or charge the crime.

Native American women represent an increasingly high number of the homeless population in the Twin Cities area and throughout Minnesota, which also places them at a heightened risk of sexual violence. In Minnesota, Native Americans comprise 11% of the total homeless population; however, this statistic is likely an under-representation as the same study indicated that 28% of Native American homeless did not stay in shelters where these surveys are taken. ...In fact, reports indicate that most homeless Native American women have histories of physical and/or sexual violence, with 92% of the women reporting violence occurring at some point in their lives and 43% reporting being sexually abused during childhood. Many women even identify childhood sexual violence as the leading cause of their homelessness. In addition, an increased likelihood of substance abuse and mental illness exacerbates these risk factors and heightens their chances of future assaults with additional trauma.

The links between childhood sexual violence, homelessness, and prostitution are alarming. In one study on prostituted women in North Minneapolis, 56% of respondents reported that they first experienced prostitution as a juvenile and also overwhelmingly reported a history of sexual violence and substance abuse. ...While the Minnesota state law is expansive in understanding that victims need not be forced into sexual exploitation in order to have been victimized, this law has never been used to prosecute a sex trafficking case since the current penalties for those charged are weak. As a result, many cases of suspected sexual exploitation and trafficking are charged under other statutes, such as drug charges or money laundering, simply because the current law does not reflect the nature of the crime.

It also sends victims the message that the violation of human beings is deemed less important than drug or money crimes. This must change to allow the successful prosecution of traffickers.

... Of all prostitution arrests in the state 93% occur in the South Minneapolis neighborhood where MIWRC is located and where high concentrations of Native Americans reside. A disproportionate number of prostituted women are Native women. ... In 2005, Native American women represented 15% of all prostitution arrests in the precinct, even though Native Americans represent less than 2% of the state's total population.

... One client at MIWRC reported that her mother sold her into prostitution at age twelve to support the mother's crack addiction. At the age of fourteen, this young woman began pimping out younger girls to support her own crack habit. She subsequently went to prison and lost custody of six children. By the time she reached the age of twenty-eight, she wanted a job, but lacking a GED and employment history, she had few options. "Who is going to help me," she asked staff, "when the only way I know how to make money is to prostitute myself and no one will give me a break?" This young woman was a victim of a federal crime, yet she was criminalized by a system that did not have adequate training or protocols in place to recognize domestic trafficking law and respond appropriately. In addition, this story raises the question of what happened to her mother that led to a life of drug addiction, prostitution, and such despair and hopelessness that the prostitution of her twelve-year-old daughter was an option. This is another indicator of the multi-generational trauma that so many Native women struggle to overcome.

Minnesota prohibits the "solicitation, inducement, and promotion of prostitution" and defines sex trafficking as "receiving, recruiting, enticing, harboring, providing or obtaining by any means an individual to aid



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MN Indians *cont. from pg. 2*

in the prostitution of the individual.” The state, therefore, clearly identifies prostitution as a crime against the individual who has been prostituted, yet it has never used these statutory prohibitions against prostitution to prosecute a case of sex trafficking.

In 2005, the Minnesota Legislature established the *Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force* (Vick Task Force) to ...identify and address human trafficking. ... In 2007, MIWRC asked that the Vick Task Force specifically include research quantifying the numbers of Native American women who had been trafficked into prostitution in this report. The resulting survey identified a total of 342 Native American victims and found an additional four law enforcement agencies that also reported working with Native American victims of sex trafficking. This report was the first documented evidence proving that (a) Native American women are being trafficked into prostitution, and (b) these numbers are statistically significant given the relatively low response and limited understanding of the legal definition of trafficking among many service providers and law enforcement agencies.

...In 2008, MIWRC joined a coalition of organizations and individuals to address the heightened incidences of sex trafficking and prostitution seen around large conferences and conventions. This movement was driven by the Republican and Democratic National Conventions occurring in St. Paul and Denver, respectively. The group was dubbed ANESEM—*Action Network to End Sexual Exploita-*

Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples: A Global Problem

The U. S. State Department’s *Trafficking in Persons* (TIP) 2009 Report highlighted the plight of indigenous peoples in many countries. Some examples:

- **Bolivia** — Members of indigenous communities are particularly at risk of forced labor within the country, especially on ranches, sugar cane, and Brazilian nut plantations. (TIP pg. 81)
- **Costa Rica** — According to anecdotal reports, young indigenous Panamanians may be trafficked to Costa Rica for forced panhandling. (TIP pg. 112)
- **Gabon** — Reports also indicate that some indigenous Pygmies are subjected to slaverylike conditions, without effective recourse in the judicial system. (TIP pg. 137)
- **Mexico** — Groups considered most vulnerable to human trafficking in Mexico include women and children, indigenous persons, and undocumented migrants. (TIP pg. 206)
- **Paraguay** — Indigenous persons are particularly vulnerable to being subjected to debt bondage by Amazon landowners. (TIP pg. 206)

tion in Minnesota. ... According to ANESEM’s report, 90% of women in prostitution have histories of abuse and lack the resources to leave these abusive situations despite their desire to do so....

Minnesota frequently excuses inadequate responses to sex trafficking and prostitution on the state’s financial situation—Minnesota forecasts a budget deficit of over \$5 billion for 2009. Data shows that in 2005, however, the state spent over \$8 billion to address problems of sexual violence. It is important to note that the majority of these funds were spent on perpetrators, not victim services or prevention. This data indicates that Minnesota is investing huge sums of financial resources in a reactive posture rather than proactively working on prevention and early intervention—Minnesota can do better than that.

MIWRC and its partners introduced a bill during the 2008 legislative session requesting funding to conduct culturally-based research into the scope of sex trafficking of Native Americans in Minnesota. Although the bill was not funded, these efforts brought significant attention to the

issue. ... Minnesota needs an approach that recognizes that prostitution and sex trafficking are often the same crime, that women who have been prostituted overwhelmingly have extensive trauma histories and require long term social service to rebuild their lives, and that predators need to be held accountable for their crimes. ...

Finally, the state needs a better understanding of the complex issues facing Native Americans. A basic knowledge of the role that historic trauma has played in Native American communities will encourage law enforcement and the judicial system to seek culturally based, sustained services for victims. MIWRC has demonstrated that culturally-based community services have more positive outcomes and that the role of culture in healing trauma is strong. ...It seems an overwhelming task, but to do nothing is not an option. Traditionally, Native communities work for the benefit of the children as the most sacred gift. We must work together to protect and nurture all children so they may grow up safely and reach their full potential as community members.



Awareness

4 **Malaysia: Trend in Trafficking of Tribal Women**

“The trafficking of tribal people is on the rise across Southeast Asia,” said Irene Fernandez, executive director of Tenaganita, a Malaysian NGO that tracks trafficking of women to Malaysia from across the Asia Pacific region. *“It is a most heinous crime because tribal girls are duped into believing they are getting high-paying office and home jobs, but are forced into prostitution,”* she explained.

Not only are tribal people from the region trafficked to Malaysia, Malaysia’s Penan people, from the interiors of Sarawak state and the Orang Asli tribal groups in peninsular Malaysia are trafficked internally and exploited as well. *“It is their poverty, dislocation and vulnerability that makes the tribals easily exploited,”* said a Malaysian researcher. *“The government is totally unresponsive; it is total neglect of indigenous people.”*

The case of five young Naga tribal women from northeast India, who were trafficked from their village to Singapore and later moved to Malaysia and forced to work as sex slaves, highlighted the plight of tribal women uprooted from their villages and trapped in Malaysia, a country generally hostile to migrants. As many as 150 women from Manipur, Assam and Nagaland, India have been duped and forced into prostitution in this region. The Indian government is investigating. According to migration experts, trafficking of tribal girls is widespread within India but, because of the great demand in South East Asian capitals, traffickers are beginning to traffic them outside India in the hope of making a fortune. *“Tribal people are rare in these capitals and there is a rising demand for them in many brothels and massage parlors because of their rarity,”* said a migration expert.

The sex trade is also shifting from capitals to towns and villages. Foreign women are trafficked to even remote areas because of rising demand, expanding wealth and minimal supervision by police and other enforcement agencies. The remoteness of these villages will make it more difficult to stop. Although Malaysia has tough laws to curb trafficking, few people are ever booked for the offense of trafficking. *“We have to stop women from leaving their villages by addressing issues of poverty, human rights and legal protection against exploitation,”* Fernandez concluded. (<http://www.galdu.org/web/index.php?odas=3308&giella1=eng>)

Besides indigenous Malaysian women and girls being trafficked within Malaysia for labor or commercial sexual exploitation, Malaysian women of Chinese ethnicity and from indigenous groups and rural areas are trafficked to destinations including Singapore, Hong Kong, France and the United Kingdom, for commercial sexual exploitation. (TIP pg. 197-98)

Asia has the largest number of indigenous and tribal people. In India alone there are more than 80 million. (Identification of Indigenous Peoples, Powerpoint at <http://pro169.org/html/en/>)

Colombia: Indigenous People Troubled by U.S. Military Presence

Karmen Ramírez Boscán, a Wayuu indigenous woman and leader in Colombia’s largest association of indigenous people -- the *National Indigenous Organization of Colombia* (ONIC), is concerned about allowing U.S. troops to use military bases in her country. At the August 2009 sessions of the U.N. *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) in Geneva, the effects of militarization in Colombia were examined, but the controversial issue of Colombia’s permission for the U.S. to use seven military bases was not raised. ONIC members fear the fight against drugs and terrorism is being used as a pretext to return to U.S. control over Latin American countries. The presence of neither U.S. nor Colombian military bases is acceptable to indigenous peoples.

The fear is that there will be an increase in sexual abuse of young indigenous women by foreign soldiers. *“These bases will create changed circumstances and greater difficulties for Colombian, especially indigenous, women. I think that, directly or indirectly, this generates violence, and obviously its most immediate effects are on Colombian women,”* said Boscán.

An expert with the *Transnational Institute* commented, *“We should not forget that military bases are usually inhabited mostly by young men who get bored and frustrated, being far from home, family and friends. They seek ‘diversion’ in town. The result is a steep increase in all sorts of crime, including rape, drugs, theft and violent abuse.”*

“Cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking cannot mean interference and the covert abdication of sovereignty to another country,” said Andrade, an elder statesman of the Emberá people and president of ONIC. *“We’re already sick and tired of the internal armed conflict. We think*
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Forced Labor

Forced labor occurs when people are subjected to psychological or physical coercion in order to perform work, which they would not otherwise have freely chosen. Forced labor includes situations such as slavery, practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, or serfdom. *International Labor Organization* (ILO) research indicates that indigenous peoples in many areas are at high risk of becoming victims of forced labor, as a result of longstanding discrimination.

In Latin America, today as centuries ago, the main victims of forced labor are indigenous peoples. In South Asia, bonded labor remains particularly severe among the Dalits and Adivasis. Women and girls from the hill tribes of the Mekong region of South-East Asia are known to be particularly vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation. In Central Africa, forced labor appears to be a particular problem for the Baka, Batwa and other so-called 'pygmy' peoples.

The ILO's *Forced Labor Convention* No. 29 from 1930 obliges ILO member states to suppress the use of forced or compulsory labor in all its forms within the shortest possible period. In 1957, the *Abolition of Forced Labor Convention* No 105 outlined specific purposes for which forced labor can never be imposed, namely for economic development or as a means of political education, discrimination, labor discipline, or punishment for having participated in strikes. ("*Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Rights in Practice: A Guide to ILO Convention No. 169*" pg. 157)

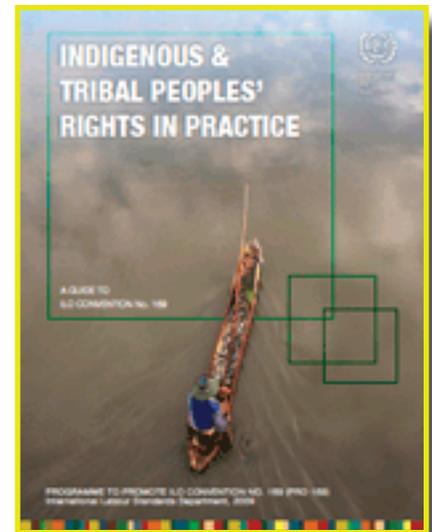
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Rights

In 1989, the *International Labor Organization* adopted the *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (ILO Convention No. 169). Since then, the Convention has been ratified by 20 countries and has guided and inspired governments and indigenous peoples all over the world in their work to promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights.

The *Guide* presents experiences, practices and lessons learned in the twenty years, thus providing a practical tool for the further understanding and implementation of indigenous peoples' rights.

"Fundamental rights are inalienable and inherent human rights that every human being has from birth, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class as well as indigenous origin and identity. Indigenous peoples are entitled to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as does everyone else. Such basic rights include the right to liberty and equality, as well as rights to citizenship, to health, education, etc. These fundamental rights apply equally to men and women.

It may seem needless or redundant to state that indigenous peoples should enjoy such fundamental rights but, unfortunately, their histories are often marked by genocide, ethnocide, discrimination, forced labor – and, in many cases, violations of their fundamental rights still continue. Current violations of fundamental rights can, for example, take the form of denial of citizenship, bonded labor and human trafficking or restricted access to education and health services. Often, women are more affected by such violations than men." (Guide pg. 32)



'PRO 169' is the *Program to Promote ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples*. It is located within the International Labor Standards Department of the ILO.

On its website are many resources, films and PowerPoint materials available for download or purchase.

(<http://pro169.org/>)

Canada: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

According to Audrey Huntley, co-founder of the coalition '*No More Silence*', indigenous women are far more likely to die from violence than other women in Canada. Over the years many indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered without the perpetrators being brought to justice.

'*No More Silence*' addresses the injustice and impunity surrounding these women's murders and disappearance. (<http://awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/Audrey-Huntley-on-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women>)



Action

Be a Voice Against Child Sex Tourism

Tassa Tags

End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT) International has been working to end commercial sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism since 1991.

One means ECPAT uses is the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* (www.thecode.org), now signed by more than 900 companies around the world.

Another project is the 'TassaTag' Project. A *TassaTag* is a 4x6-inch hand-woven cotton luggage tag that helps one spot luggage more easily.

- The Project has three goals:
- to enhance a financial enterprise for high-risk women in Thailand, who make the luggage tags by hand. The income allows them to remain in their villages and send their children to school.
 - *TassaTags* help raise awareness about how all can protect children from sexual exploitation;
 - *TassaTag* purchases help raise funds to continue the effort to fight against child prostitution and trafficking that fuels child sex tourism.



To order go to:
<http://www.tassatag.org>
or call 925-451-0028.

'Body Shop' Cosmetics

The *Body Shop* has teamed up with *EcpatUSA* and *Beyond Borders*, the U.S. and Canadian affiliates of *ECPAT International* respectively, and with the *Somaly Mam Foundation* to launch a campaign to raise awareness about child sexual exploitation. The campaign is titled "Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People". The *Somaly Mam Foundation* raises awareness about child sexual exploitation and provides rescue and rehabilitation services to trafficked children in Cambodia.

As part of the campaign, the *Body Shop* will be selling various products, including *Soft Hands* and *Kind Heart Hand Cream*. Proceeds from these sales will go to *EcpatUSA*, *Beyond Borders* and *Somaly Mam* to assist these organizations in their work against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

(<http://www.thebodyshop.ca/home>)

Editor's Note:
Stop Trafficking does not endorse
any particular product.

'Peace Keeper Cause-metics'

PeaceKeeper is an 'all-benefit' company, meaning companies that give all their distributable profits to charity after taxes, debt repayment, financing costs and reasonable working capital reserves. Each company has slightly different structures and guidelines, but all are committed to building sustainable companies that give their distributable profits to charity.

PeaceKeeper Cause-Metics gives all of its after tax distributable profits to women's health advocacy and human rights issues. *PeaceKeeper* has researched information on key issues that affect women around the globe: sexual harassment, domestic violence and battery, rape, gender inequality, female sex slave trade, honor crimes, infanticide, female genital mutilation, and women's health advocacy.

Knowing the single best thing to give a woman that moves her away from exploitation and poverty is an education and an economic option, *PeaceKeepers* is committed to make a difference. To date *Peacekeeper* donations have reached over \$55,000. Another \$30,000 in products was donated to women-focused non-profits for their silent auctions or VIP events.

PeaceKeeper pledges the following in its business practices:

- *Slavery free* - If any type of exploitation in hours, safety, healthcare, or retirement is found, *PeaceKeeper* severs ties with that company. *Peacekeeper* consults with www.newstandards.com to monitor this.
- *Fair wages* - for their employees in the U.S. and overseas;
- *Animal loving* - no products sold are tested on animals;
- *Ethical* - using the yogi values of truthfulness, non-violence and non-stealing.

To see who/where *PeaceKeeper Cause-metics* has donated, go to:
www.iamapeacekeeper.com/whatwehavefunded.htm



Action

Upcoming Conferences

'Human Trafficking: The Price We Pay Is Loss of Soul'

The Symposium will be held Feb. 27, 2010 (8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) at Mount St. Mary's College, Doheny Campus in Los Angeles, CA 90007. The keynote speaker will be E. Benjamin Skinner, a reporter on international affairs and author of *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-To-Face With Modern Slavery*.

There will also be interactive workshops about modern day slavery and its costs to human persons, children, family and community, relationships, the moral fabric of society, the economy, and the impact on the U.N. Millennium Development goals.

For information, contact Mary Genino at wap-jpic@rshm.org



Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking
Resource Center
1.888.3737.888

CATW: Involving Men

The *Coalition Against Trafficking of Women* (CATW) works to end male violence against women and girls, to achieve gender equality, and to challenge the demand for commercial sex that promotes sex trafficking.

CATW is planning a conference on Dec. 2, 2009 entitled, "A Conversation Among Men About Sex Trafficking". This program will explore the political role men must play to end violence against women and girls, especially sex trafficking. Panelists include Victor Malarek (*The Johns*), Aaron Cohen (*Slave Hunter*) and others. The program is from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at NYU Wasserman Center for Career Development, 133 E. 13th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003

For the Gift-Giving Season

By buying *Fair Trade* products or supporting microlending projects, you give a gift of empowerment to neighbors abroad. This helps them stay with their families and provide a future for them. Here are a few of the many options to consider:

KIVA — Loans that save lives.
<http://www.kiva.org/>

The '**Free a Village**' campaign, run by *Free the Slaves*, pools donations to fund schools, vocational training and provide equipment and development guidance to move whole villages into freedom. Contact:

kate.horner@freetheslaves.net
http://www.clintonlobalinitiative.org/newsmedia/newsmedia_pressreleases_092409.asp?Section=NewsMedia

Informative Web Sites:

(Each contains information related to human trafficking)

ECPATUSA

<http://www.ecpatusa.org>

Beyond Borders

<http://www.beyondborders.org/wp/>

Somaly Mam Foundation

<http://www.somaly.org>

Colombia *cont. from pg. 4*

(U.S. access to) these bases should not be implemented, because we believe it will damage relations with bordering countries." Deteriorating relations of Colombia with Ecuador and Venezuela have repercussions on health care and food security for more than 20 indigenous villages along the Ecuadorean and Venezuelan borders that get most of their supplies of food, clothing and even medicines from Venezuela. The Chávez administration has frozen Venezuelan relations with Colombia because of the decision over military bases, despite their former close economic ties.

The plans for U.S. access to the bases have met with vocal resistance in Colombia on the part of human rights and indigenous organizations and civil society in general. But R. Boscán commented, "The Colombian government has responded with indifference."

(<http://www.ipsnews.net>)

(<http://www.mathaba.net/news/?x=621588>)

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.

Use the following web address to access back issues of *Stop Trafficking!*

<http://www.stopenslavement.org/index.html>

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please contact: jeansds2010@yahoo.com

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