

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sex tourism is the travel by buyers of sexual services for the purpose of procuring sexual services from another person in exchange for money and/or goods. Sex tourism can occur between countries or cities. Sex tourists create a demand which drives the recruitment of more victims to be trafficked to commercial sex markets to meet their demands. Human trafficking, including sex trafficking, is defined in Article 3 of the United Nations Protocol as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation...; (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.” The Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000 (TVPA) sec. 103(9) defines sex trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” and explains that all “severe forms of trafficking in persons” means—(A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion.” Both provide that the inducement of a child less than 18 years of age eliminates the need to prove force, fraud or coercion. Sex trafficking is the response to demand in the market; it is the supply of persons, especially women and children, who are brought into sexual slavery and exploitation.

Shared Hope International (SHI), with funding from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State, undertook a twelve month examination of the marketplace of commercial sexual exploitation—defined in this report as the buying and selling of humans for the purposes of sexual exploitation in exchange for anything of value—in four countries: Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States. Each of these countries has major markets of commercial sexual services, and each country is a destination for sex tourists from abroad and internally. Moreover, each country has a distinctly different culture, economy, political system, and history of prostitution and slavery which presented comparative examinations of the operation of sex tourism and trafficking markets. Field researchers traveled to each country and worked closely with local specialists to gain access to many venues and actors in the commercial sex markets in order to understand the impact of demand for commercial sex on sex tourism and sex trafficking.

This report approaches sex tourism and sex trafficking from a market-based perspective in which buyers of commercial sex services bring demand, traffickers move victims like product to the markets to satisfy the demand, and facilitators allow the trade to occur in a myriad of ways, for example by providing a venue for the transactions, similar to a shopping mall of human product.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEX TOURISM ARE A SINGLE MARKET OF EXPLOITATION

In the sex tourism markets, demand exceeds supply of women to provide the commercial sex services which buyers are groomed to expect through advertising and popular culture. Sex traffickers fill this deficiency by delivering women and children to meet the demand of buyers in sex tourism markets. This creates a single market of sexual exploitation in which sex tourism is fueled by sex trafficking.

Buyers are groomed to expect immediate and easy access to commercial sex and are demanding sex internationally and locally. This results in the trafficking of vulnerable women and children to satisfy that demand for commercial sex services. The perils of sex tourism reach both foreign and local women and children. Facilitators continue to use the same exploitation techniques for local and foreign girls. This use of local victims in a local market has altered the traditional view of sex tourism and has created a marketplace in which sex trafficking and sex tourism cannot be viewed separately.

II. A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE FOR COMMERCIAL SEX EXISTS IN EACH OF THE LOCATIONS

The culture of tolerance for sex markets is an environment shaped by geography, history, tradition, legislation, language, behavior and many other influences. A unique culture of tolerance exists in each of the four countries as the backdrop for the operation of commercial sex markets. Commercial sex has been normalized to such a degree that buyers no longer feel compelled to travel abroad to satisfy sexual urges. As the culture continues to normalize sexual images and activities, the markets grow. Specific examples of normalization occurring within the cultures of tolerance include the following:

- **Jamaica:** In this tourism-reliant country, a perception of escapism is encouraged through advertising by all-inclusive adult-only resorts that encourage tourists to demand any pleasure they wish, as well as smaller travel companies which arrange sex tours. On a local level, severe poverty has led to the cultural allowance of “making do,” which includes earning money for oneself and one’s family by any means available, including commercial sex by children and adults.
- **The Netherlands:** Legalized prostitution, promotion of red light districts as tourism activities, and centuries-long tolerance of commercial sexual activity have resulted in development of extreme, “fringe” commercial sex markets and the tremendous growth in demand for commercial sexual services by both local and international visitors.
- **United States:** The sexualized popular culture glamorizes pimping and prostitution and reduces the moral barriers to accessing commercial sex without regard to the origin or conditions of the trafficked women and children. Las Vegas’ now famous slogan, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas,” provides visitors with an excuse to act in ways outside the norm of their own community.
- **Japan:** The equation of sex with physical health and heavily enforced cultural gender roles has normalized the Japanese male’s “need” for sex. The legality of all sexual services except vaginal intercourse provides easy access to these normalized commercial sex markets.

III. LABELING AND MISIDENTIFICATION ALLOW TRAFFICKING MARKETS TO FLOURISH

Failure by government, law enforcement and society to identify trafficked women and children as victims often results in improper placement and treatment. Misidentification occurs when victims are labeled as illegal immigrants, juvenile delinquents, drug mules, or thieves and forced or coerced to commit crimes while being trafficked. This criminalization can subject victims to incarceration and deportation. Labeling victims of sex trafficking, adults and minors, as willing prostitutes, “lot lizards” and “hos” also impedes their access to social services and legal aid. These labels allow buyers to dehumanize the victim, using her simply as a product. The impact of this misidentification also works to facilitate sex trafficking by allowing the trafficker to operate with little fear of any consequences.

Simultaneously, while blame is assigned to victims of sex trafficking, traffickers and buyers are able to benefit from being labeled with normalized names—johns, tricks, clients, “loverboys” or pimps—which do not carry the stigma and criminal weight they should. Statistically, it is clear that political and societal will and resources to bring the buyer and trafficker to justice is lacking. For example, in 2006, according to statistics collected in one county in Nevada, 153 minors were arrested for prostitution, but only two pimps were arrested in these cases. Furthermore, Congressional findings in the End Demand for Sex Trafficking Bill issued April 28, 2005, stated that 11 females used in commercial sex acts were arrested in Boston for every one arrest of a male purchaser; 9 females to every one male purchaser in Chicago; and 6 females to every one male purchaser in New York City.

IV. CRIMINAL MARKETS OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS EXIST

In all locations, the commercial sex market provides a veneer of acceptability and legality. However, a criminal black market hides behind this veneer using trafficking victims to satisfy the surplus demand from sex tourists for services advertised. Under the guise of legal commercial sex venues, such as strip clubs, escort services and adult pornography, sex trafficking provides human victims to fulfill the demand in the criminal sexual exploitation markets.

V. BUYERS ARE SITUATIONAL, PREFERENTIAL, OR OPPORTUNISTIC

Buyers of sexual services can be placed in three categories: situational, preferential and opportunistic. The definitions of buyers commonly employed by those working in the area of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) include “situational” and “preferential” buyers. Situational buyers are defined as those who engage minors in commercial sex because they are available, vulnerable and the practice is tolerated. Preferential buyers, such as pedophiles, have a sexual preference and shop specifically in the markets providing the preferred victim or service.

In the larger commercial sex market involving adults and minors there is a third group of buyers which can be described as “opportunistic buyers.” Opportunistic buyers are those who purchase sex indiscriminately because they do not care, are willfully blind to the age or willingness of the female, or are unable to differentiate between adults and minors. Due to intensive marketing and the increased normalization of commercial sex in society, buyers from a young age are groomed to glamorize commercial sex, to dehumanize the women and children pressed into service with names such as “ho”, and even to express aggression toward the victims through violent video games such as The Pimp Game and Grand Theft Auto. A full examination of the psychology of buyers is beyond the scope of this report, but it is clear that cultures of tolerance enable the process and even condone the purchase of commercial sex by buyers.

VI. INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FACILITATE SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEX TOURISM

Institutional facilitators are the businesses, governments and other institutions benefiting in some way from commercial sex markets which use trafficked women and children. For example, some hotels facilitate sex trafficking by allowing women and children to be prostituted on the premises through inaction, tolerance or poor management. Local governments in the Netherlands facilitate sex trafficking through negligence by failing to enact regulations for all sectors of the commercial sex industry, especially escort services where trafficking victims are hidden from view. In Las Vegas, fliers and cards advertising prostitution are aggressively thrust at passersby on the Strip where no other vendor advertising is present. In all locations, failure to prioritize prosecution of the traffickers and buyers make negligent authorities and officials facilitators of trafficking. Any lack of knowledge or interest or priorities on the part of institutional facilitators does not excuse their role in perpetuating sex trafficking markets.

Individual facilitators include pimps, traffickers, cab drivers, document forgers, pornographers, corrupt or negligent officials in governments or businesses, and other individuals benefiting directly or indirectly from the commercial sex markets. Some individual facilitators receive an immediate and direct benefit, such as the payment of commissions to taxi drivers by secret neighborhood brothels operating in Las Vegas and the Atlanta suburbs. They can also benefit indirectly. For example, a government official may ignore the presence of trafficking because it supplies a market which benefits the city's economy. Individual facilitators can operate independently, as in the case of street pimps in Kingston providing young girls to sex tourists, or within a structured, organized crime network. These networks can be structured loosely, as seen in the Netherlands, or highly centralized, as in Japan.

VII. TRAFFICKERS RANGE FROM TEENAGE RECRUITERS AND PIMPS TO ESTABLISHED ORGANIZED CRIMINALS

In all locations examined, with the exception of Japan, we found that increasingly younger males are recruiting females into the sex trade. These teen facilitators relate to the victims' needs, deceive victims into thinking themselves in love, and exploit their trust and insecurities. In the Netherlands, recruiters tend to be second-generation Moroccan and Turkish young men known as "loverboys." In Jamaica, the boys are trying to "make do" by pimping their sisters and friends, or selling themselves to female sex tourists. Recruiters in the United States are increasingly teenaged boys or young men who work for older male pimps and learn to lure girls through deceit and feigned affection or act as "guerilla pimps" and simply force the girls through brutality to submit to the sexual exploitation.

Organized crime syndicates are also involved in sex trafficking in each of the four countries. In the Netherlands, we uncovered Albanian, Turkish, and Russian criminal networks that recruit women in the Balkans and former Soviet states and move them through Europe into the Netherlands. These networks are loosely organized and involve intermediaries of different nationalities. In Japan, traffickers are tightly organized crime networks that operate in major cities and abroad. Russian organized crime has trafficked women and children to the United States, the Netherlands, Japan and Jamaica. Organized crime can also be seen in more localized, loosely affiliated groups or individuals supporting each other's criminal activities, such as the recent case in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In this case, 31 men and women allegedly transported girls as part of a sex ring rotating teenaged girls through truck stops and rest areas in Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, Indiana, Georgia, Maryland, Tennessee, Florida, Louisiana, and other

states. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, served as the distribution center, utilizing intersections of five major highways to deliver a constant stream of buyers.

VIII. YOUNG FEMALES ARE RECRUITED AND EXPLOITED IN COMMERCIAL SEX MARKETS

Victims are becoming younger as demand is increasing. Vulnerable youth are especially susceptible to recruitment by pimps and traffickers. Increased attention to the exploitation of youth by traffickers has increased as well. In Las Vegas, for example, the number of prostituted domestic juvenile girls identified by police during arrests more than doubled between 1996 and 2006. In the Netherlands, one-third of trafficking investigations involved underage victims.

Demand for younger girls is increasing as buyers believe they are less likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases. Also, younger girls present the vision of innocence and vulnerability sought by buyers. The exploitation of local women and children is growing more common as foreign victims become more difficult to procure due to anti-trafficking programs in source countries, tightened immigration controls and the cultures of tolerance making domestic juveniles more readily available. Perception of sex trafficking is often of foreign women and girls being moved from their impoverished homes into a wealthier country for commercial sexual exploitation. This view is overly simplistic and even outdated, as there are many variations to the face of sex trafficking and sex tourism. Increasingly, that face is one of a local victim caught in a sex trafficking market generated by local demand.

IX. FOREIGN FEMALES STILL DEMANDED AND TRAFFICKED

Demand for foreign, “exotic” women and children for commercial sexual services has not diminished. In Las Vegas and Tokyo, in particular, advertisements for Latin lovers, Asian beauties, and Slavic sweethearts are prolific. In Washington, DC, closed ethnic, language-based and dialect-based brothels victimize women within their own “village” in the U.S. Many have simply transplanted a local market, Salvadoran men buying Salvadoran women, for example, in the U.S. Due to the poor economic situation in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean and the political upheaval and unemployment levels in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, many girls from these regions were found in Japan, Jamaica, the Netherlands and the United States.

IX. TECHNOLOGY IS THE ENGINE BEHIND THE GROWTH OF THE SEX TRADE

Technology has become the single greatest facilitator of the commercial sex trade in all of the countries observed, with the exception of Jamaica where word of mouth continues to dominate. In Japan, buyers are connected with prostituted women and children through a complex system of telephone booths and call centers. In both the Netherlands and the United States, commercial sex services and the victims providing those services are advertised extensively over the Internet, with a simple search of English language websites advertising escort services yielding 2.2 million results on Google. Cellular telephone technology is connecting buyers with victims and increasingly distancing the trafficker from the action of enslaving as he directs the transaction over the telephone.

Recent technologies have also contributed greatly to the proliferation of pornography. The viewing of adult pornography by situational or opportunistic buyers is a primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex. Although any additional measurement or analysis of the role of pornography in the commercial sex market is beyond the scope of our study, our initial

investigation into the marketplaces of victimization strongly affirms the need to research the psychological and societal costs of pornography.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, sex trafficking and sex tourism are interwoven as the former supplies the demands presented by the latter. Although each location examined has unique characteristics and manifestations of market activity, there are many similarities. The comparisons and parallels drawn in this report will enhance the collective understanding of demand for commercial sex and in turn will help to initiate collaborative, comprehensive, and ultimately successful measures to reduce demand.

