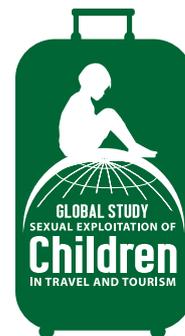


IN BRIEF

DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL OFFENDERS



SUMMARY

The definition of SECTT proposed by the Global Study (“...acts of sexual exploitation of children embedded in the context of travel, tourism or both”) reflects one of its main findings: offenders are not limited to international tourists. SECTT perpetrators might be regional or domestic business travellers, expatriates, volunteers or volun-tourists, members of peace missions or humanitarian aid workers – all travelling for purposes other than tourism. To date, the main focus of research and policy on SECTT has been on the role of international offenders, with little or no attention to other travellers.

REGIONAL AND DOMESTIC SECTT OFFENDERS

Global study findings from all regions reveal that **a large proportion of offenders come from the same country or region as their victims**. Today, the distinction between countries of origin and countries of destination is blurring. The extraordinary growth in travel and tourism, low-budget travel options and constantly evolving tourism modalities have given rise to a sharp

increase in domestic and regional travel. The Global Study found that regional and domestic travellers commit the vast majority of SECTT offences.

For example, both domestic and intra-regional tourism in most of Southeast Asia have increased sharply; visitors from within the region accounted for 45% of international arrivals in 2012. In both the Philippines and Cambodia evidence suggests that the majority of offenders are local men (90% in the Philippines, 75% in Cambodia). The vast majority of tourists in East Asia were also from other countries in the region, and domestic travellers far outnumber foreign tourists. Chinese male tourists travel to certain towns in Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet where they know they can have sex encounters with ethnic minority women or Vietnamese women and minors.

Offenders identified in Kenya came from South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda or Sudan, as well as from China and Korea. While offenders in countries in the Middle East and North Africa traditionally came mostly from developed Western countries, today there are signs that they also come from

Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia.

Domestic travellers and tourists in Latin America also frequently engage in SECTT, and the same is true in North America, where offenders are aided by extensive infrastructure and include truckers, conference-goers, temporary oilfield and mine workers and attendees at major sporting events. Similarly, in South Asia many offenders are transient workers and truckers. In the Horn of Africa, evidence points to girls from Djibouti falling victim to forced commercial sexual exploitation after reaching Djibouti City or the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor.

OLD STEREOTYPES NO LONGER VALID

The stereotype of offenders as Western, male, middle-aged, international tourists is undergoing a transformation, leading to a more nuanced understanding: there is no “typical” offender. Differences run the gamut from age, gender, class, social status, citizenship and other factors – In Latin America, tourists and travellers who sexually exploit children have diverse social and economic backgrounds. Some are wealthy businessmen travelling for work, while others are transient labourers on “mega-projects” (such as new roadways). Among 316 construction workers at different sites in five Brazilian states, 57% confirmed that children near major construction sites were being sexually exploited; 25% admitted to having had sex once or more with adolescents.

PREFERENTIAL VS. SITUATIONAL OFFENDERS

Another stereotype undermined by Global Study research is related to types of offenders. Many are, indeed, Western paedophiles – known as “preferential” offenders due to their preference for sex with children – who travel for this explicit purpose. Many others, however, are “situational” offenders who seek to engage in sex during their travels, and will do so with a child if the opportunity arises. Such decisions are often influenced by factors such as **anonymity and an environment that offers little likelihood of suffering legal or criminal consequences.**

The research suggests that **power imbalances play an important role:** when the offender or potential offender is comparatively wealthy and powerful compared to the victim, he or she gains leverage, whether the offender is a transient worker building a hotel in a remote location or a wealthy businessman looking for entertainment in a big city. Accounts of abuse of power, bribery and impunity were reported in most regions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The challenge ahead is to learn more about situational offenders and domestic travellers, who constitute the vast majority of child sex offenders, as well as about the role played by intermediaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS (SAMPLE ONLY)

National governments:

- Train police officers and other members of law enforcement agencies to respond to cases involving domestic and regional travellers
- Increase controls and child-protection efforts around major conferences, commercial and sports events as well as large development projects (e.g., construction and mining)
- Strengthen law enforcement and regional and international cooperation to combat SECTT
- Ensure that companies that have employees process that travel obtain international police clearances, reporting mechanisms and a code of conduct

Civil society organisations

- Raise awareness both internally and among the general public about the domestic and intra-regional dimension of SECTT

Private sector

- Raise awareness about SECTT amongst all travellers and tourists and employees, and train staff members to recognise child abuse and report suspicious cases
- Ensure that employees who travel domestically or internationally obtain police clearances
- Develop and enforce a code of conduct and reporting mechanisms for employees.

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