



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN CYPRUS

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.¹

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million. Human trafficking, the third largest international crime, following illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



SEX TRAFFICKING IN CYPRUS

Accurate figures on the trafficking of children for sexual purposes in Cyprus are difficult to obtain despite knowledge that Cyprus is a destination country for the trafficking of humans from many European countries.³

In 2000, the Cypriot Government passed the *Combating of Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Exploitation of Children Law*, which provides protection and support to victims of trafficking, including providing arrangements for maintenance, temporary shelter, medical care and psychiatric support.⁴ Although few studies have been conducted on the commercial exploitation of children, the passing of this law further suggests that the trafficking of children is a problem within Cypriot society.

In 2007, the Cyprus police conducted investigations on 27 cases related to human trafficking, compared to 60 in 2006. Of the 36 prosecutions pending at the end of 2006, 11 traffickers were convicted with sentences ranging from four months imprisonment to three and a half years.⁵ Between March and November 2008, from 27 pending prosecutions, the government obtained the conviction of only one trafficker, who was sentenced to two years imprisonment.⁶ The statistics do not specify the number of child victims or include cases that have not yet reached the criminal justice system.

Who gets trafficked?

According to official reports, it is predominantly women entering Cyprus from neighbouring countries in search of work who become victims of traffickers. In October 2008, the Council of Ministers in Cyprus adopted a policy to abolish the use of the “artiste” category work permit for women from non-EU countries working in the cabaret industry.⁷ Until this time, most reported victims of trafficking were fraudulently recruited to Cyprus on three-month “artiste” work permits to work in the cabaret industry or on tourist visas to work in massage parlours disguised as private apartments.⁸ The extent to which the abolishment of the “artiste” work permit will impact the sex trafficking of children for commercial purposes in Cyprus is at this stage unknown.

The demand for sex drives child sex trafficking globally, while poverty, domestic violence and abuse, discrimination and the desire for a better life makes children vulnerable. Children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked because they are often uneducated, easy to overpower and easy to convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children in refugee camps, children whose family and community life has been disrupted and do not have someone to look out for them are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced, or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived. Countries are considered:

- ‘Sending’ or ‘origin’ - from where children are sent;
- ‘Transit’ - where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- ‘Receiving’ or ‘destination’ - where the children finally end up.

Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries might only be sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. Cyprus is a destination country for the commercial sexual trafficking of children.

Cyprus is a destination country for a large number of women trafficked from the Philippines, Russia, Moldova, Hungary, Ukraine, Greece, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and the Dominican Republic for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.⁹



For child trafficking, **Cyprus** is primarily considered as a:

- origin country
- transit country
- ✓ destination country
- internal/domestic country

Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married or single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

As Cyprus has grown in economic prosperity, joined the European Union and is strategically located on the juncture of Africa, the Middle East and Europe, the island has attracted many migrants, as well as criminal trafficking networks.¹⁰ During the 1990s, young women from the former Soviet bloc were attracted to the high salaries for short-term contracts offered in Cyprus and often entered the island with the hope of finding work in the Cabaret industry. These women provided the supply side of the business opportunities for trafficking in persons while the cabaret industry provided the demand side.¹¹ Although there have been suggestions that minors have been involved in the cabaret trafficking, there are no official figures to confirm this.

Who are the traffickers?

Traffickers can be a stranger or someone the child knows, such as a relative or a friend. Traffickers are often part of an organised criminal network that 'recruits' children and supplies them with fake identification. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life. A Senior Cypriot Police Officer observed that the majority of culprits of sexual exploitation are Cypriot citizens and that since 2004 there has been a steady increase in the number of cases where national citizens were prosecuted.¹²

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- It is recommended that the State party continue to strengthen its efforts to provide adequate and systematic training and sensitisation on children's rights, for professional groups working with children, with particular attention to law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges.
- It is necessary for the Cypriot government to review legislation and amend where necessary, to ensure that all children are accorded equal rights without discrimination based on their ethnicity, sex or other grounds.
- Improvement to the quality of trafficking prosecutions to secure convictions and appropriate punishments for traffickers is required.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Cyprus	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Cyprus
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	7 February 1991	Initial Report: 22 December 1994 15 August 2000	In response to the 2000 report, the Committee recommends that the State party pursues efforts to nominate a commissioner or specific division within the National Institution that would be responsible, in particular, for addressing complaints made by children in a child-sensitive manner.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	6 April 2006	N/A	N/A
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	6 August 2003	N/A	N/A

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Cyprus	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Cyprus
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	27 November 2000	N/A	N/A
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	24 October 2007 – Entry into force February 2008		

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- It is recommended that the State establish standard operating procedures to protect and assist victims that are staying at trafficking shelters.
- Provide awareness raising to families and communities that supplies appropriate direction and guidance on the rights of the child and the sex trafficking of children for commercial purposes.
- It is necessary to develop and launch a comprehensive demand reduction campaign specifically aimed at clients of the entertainment industry and the larger public to reduce wide-spread misconceptions about trafficking and the links to commercial sex.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

SafenetCY is a hotline that promotes the safe use of the Internet in Cyprus. It addresses issues of child pornography, child erotica, child nudity, child grooming activities, child trafficking, child sex tourism, racism, gender discrimination and inappropriate use of peoples' images.

See: <http://www.cyberethics.info/cyethics2/page.php?pageID=15>

To report a suspected incident of sexual exploitation of children call: 22 67 47 47.

MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

- ¹ UNICEF. *UNICEF calls for increased efforts to prevent trafficking of children*. 16 June 2007. Accessed from: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html
- ² UNODC. *UNODC report on human trafficking exposes modern form of slavery*. 12 February 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Protection Project. *Country Report: Cyprus*. 2008. Accessed from: www.protectionproject.org/human_rights_reports/report_documents/cyprus.doc.
- ⁵ UNODC. *UNODC report on human trafficking exposes modern form of slavery*. 12 February 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ⁶ Bureau of Trafficking in Persons. *Trafficking in Persons interim assessment (May-November 2008)*. 27 January 2009. Accessed from: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/reports/2009/116114.htm>
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ UNODC. *UNODC report on human trafficking exposes modern form of slavery*. 12 February 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Protection Project. *Country Report: Cyprus*. 2008. Accessed from: www.protectionproject.org/human_rights_reports/report_documents/cyprus.doc.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Alexia Saoulli. "Cyprus is a flesh trade destination". *Cyprus Mail*. 2009. Accessed from: http://www.cyprus-mail.com/news/main.php?id=30766&cat_id=1



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