



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN PORTUGAL

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.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest criminal activity in the world, following the international trade in 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



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN PORTUGAL

No reliable data is available on the extent of children trafficked for sexual exploitation in Portugal. This is due not only to the illegal and criminal aspect of trafficking, but also to the lack of research, awareness of the problem and the limited extent of coordinated services available to child victims in the country. However, Portugal is an attractive country for immigrants from all over the world, especially from Portuguese speaking countries (former colonies in Africa and Brazil), and Eastern Europe

(since Portugal is part of the Schengen community). Experience in neighbouring European countries has also exposed the associated risks of child trafficking.³

Around the world, 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 be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Portugal is a country of origin, transit and destination for the trafficking of children. Children from Portugal have reportedly been trafficked to Spain for sexual purposes.⁴ Primarily, children trafficked to Portugal come from Brazil and, to a lesser extent, from Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Romania and Africa (Angola, Mozambique and Nigeria) for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour.⁵ Some of the victims are then trafficked on to other European countries.

The routes used to enter Portugal are varied and mostly depend on the victim's country of origin. For countries in Latin America, particularly Brazil, the majority of victims enter Portugal via another European country, mainly through the airports in Madrid and Paris and to a lesser extent via German or Italian cities.⁶ Victims from other European countries enter by land and because of Portugal's proximity to North Africa, it is most often used as a transit route for Nigerians travelling to other parts of Europe.⁷ Angolans are also reported to be trafficked into Portugal.⁸ Child trafficking has been specifically detected in coastal areas where unaccompanied children or street children are targeted for recruitment for the purposes of sexual exploitation, prostitution and pornography.⁹

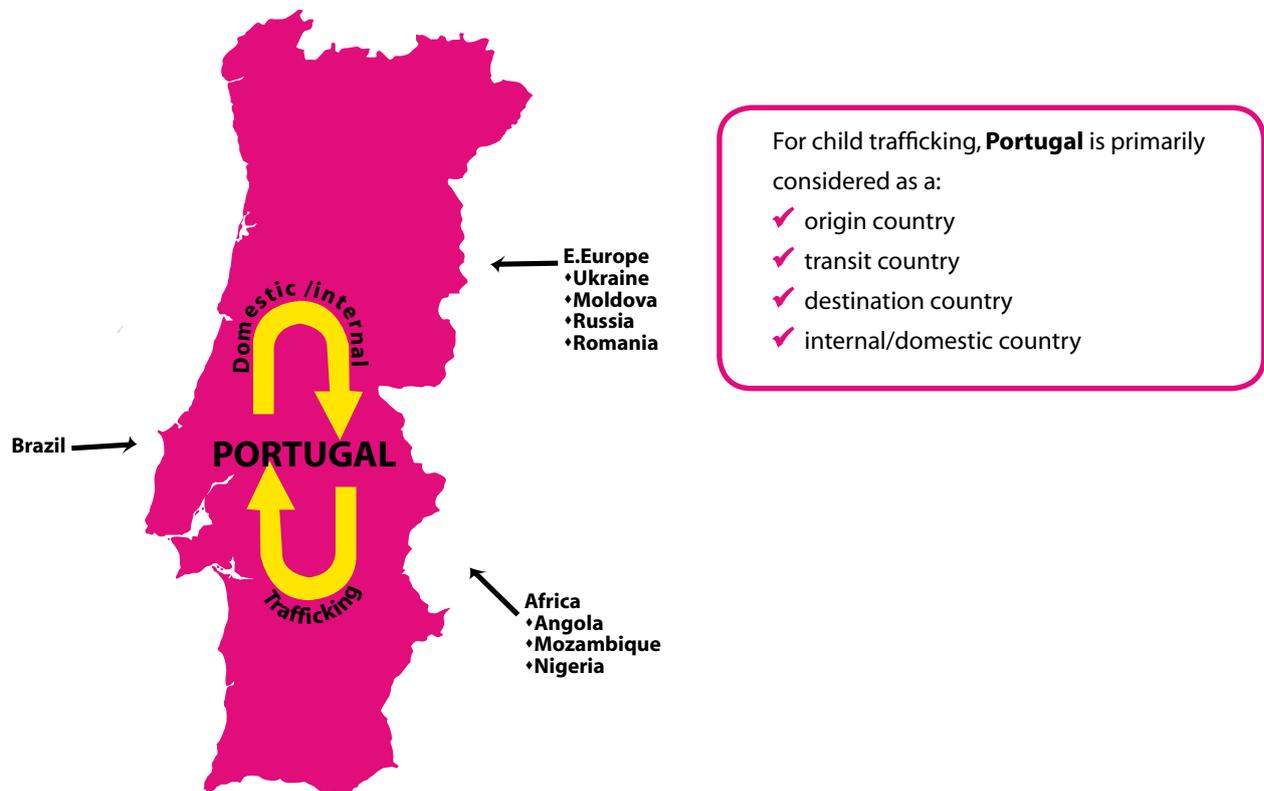
Who gets trafficked?

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 less educated, 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.

Brazilian teenagers, mainly Afro-descendants, have been trafficked to destinations in Europe, including Portugal.¹⁰ Social and cultural barriers make these children more vulnerable to trafficking. Usually relegated to low paying jobs in Brazil, their difficult living conditions make them more likely to accept job offers in foreign countries.

In many parts of Africa, including Angola, child fostering is very common. Children are given to relatives or friends who are wealthier and better able to provide for the socio-economic needs of the child. This act is believed to be a beneficial way of

securing a better future for the child and its immediate family. Unfortunately, this practice has been widely abused and many children sent into this fostering relationship suffer from all manner of physical and sexual abuse, including sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Most of these victims are young girls who are hired mainly for domestic work.¹¹



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, single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

Portugal is considered a major European destination for sex tourists. According to a research by the European Coordination Office, 86% of Portuguese nationals interviewed believed that child sex tourism occurs in Portugal.¹² Child pornography is also a big concern in the country. In 2005, as a result of an operation against internet child pornography in Portugal, 47 Portuguese men were arrested on charges of possessing child pornography films and 58 computers were seized.¹³

Who are the traffickers?

The complexity of trafficking network operations makes it difficult to effectively arrest traffickers and to obtain a reliable estimate of the number and objectives of illegal persons who enter Portugal every year. Data available from the Ministry of Justice concerning the crimes of trafficking in human beings and procurement indicate that in the year 2000, 21 criminal proceedings were tried and finalised. Of these 21 cases, only eight resulted in convictions.¹⁴ This low figure suggests challenges to combat these complex trafficking networks in the Portuguese law enforcement and judicial system.

Recruiters of child victims are as varied as the form of recruitment. While many are part of criminal groups, many recruiters are relatives, neighbours, friends or boyfriends of the victims, who use persuasion and deceit. Another form of recruitment involves fake travel, modeling or employment agencies, which lead victims to believe that they will be entering into a professional occupation. The search for girls in orphanages is also used to recruit and identify victims.¹⁵

CASE STUDIES

- In 2003, an Angolan-born soccer player was found to have trafficked children to the United Kingdom for prostitution and other forms of exploitation. He persuaded young Angolan boys living in the barrios in Portugal to fulfill their dreams of playing professional soccer by offering them a chance to learn the game at a soccer camp in England.¹⁶ He made frequent trips to the United Kingdom, taking the Angolan children with him, often accompanied by a woman posing as the children's aunt. In December 2000, he caught the attention of police on a flight to London from Faro. In March 2002, he was jailed in Portugal for 6.5 years for forging travel documents and aiding the illegal immigration of an estimated 50 boys into the United Kingdom.¹⁷
- In 2007, Portuguese and British police investigating the abduction of the English toddler Madeleine McCann, who was kidnapped in Praia da Luz, Portugal, believed that an international child abuse network could have trafficked her. The British police also provided a list of UK sex offenders that had recently travelled to Portugal.¹⁸

This would not be the first time that a child was kidnapped and trafficked in Portugal by a paedophile ring. In 1998, an 11-year-old Portuguese boy called Rui Pedro Mendonça vanished while walking home from school in the northern Portuguese town Lousada. A month later, he was sighted with a middle-aged man at Disneyland, in Paris. Three years later, images of Rui Pedro being sexually abused were reportedly uncovered during an international police operation that cracked a global paedophile network. More than 200 paedophiles in 13 countries had exchanged more than 750,000 images of thousands of children through a private internet club called Wonderland. Later in 1999, another Portuguese child was kidnapped and seen with two Italian men in Switzerland. Unfortunately, none of the boys have ever been found.¹⁹

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Portugal needs to strengthen protection of children from trafficking and sexual exploitation by urgently implementing the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, and in particular, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, and the *Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings*. Portugal needs a specific legal framework on child trafficking, in accordance with these international instruments.
- The Government should acknowledge the dimension and seriousness of the phenomenon of human trafficking, especially when children are involved, and allocate more resources to the detection and prosecution of this crime.
- The Government should ensure that convicted traffickers receive prison sentences that reflect the gravity of the crimes they have committed.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Portugal	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Portugal
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990	Initial Report due in 1992 – submitted in 1994 Second Periodic Report due in 1997 – submitted in 2001	The Committee did not mention trafficking in children specifically, but they strongly urged Portugal to take measures to improve and implement more legislation and policies with regard to ensuring protection of the rights of all children from minority groups, offering particular attention to the situation of Roma children.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2003	Initial Report due in 2007 but not yet submitted	N/A
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	2004	N/A	N/A
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2000	N/A	N/A
Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings	2008	N/A	N/A

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Research is urgently required on the extent and scope of child trafficking in Portugal. Disaggregated data should then be used to develop targeted awareness raising campaigns about child trafficking and to ensure that appropriate government support services are established to assist child trafficking victims.
- Measures should be put in place to improve the protection of children separated from their families, namely their identification, age assessment, registration, family tracing, guardianship, best interests' determination, treatment and care.
- Specialised care and support programmes need to be developed and tailored to meet the specific needs of child victims of trafficking. This needs to be supported with specialist training programmes for caregivers.
- A helpline for trafficking victims should be set up - including one for children - and an awareness campaign directed at victims to encourage them to seek assistance must be developed.

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. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html
- ² UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality. *Trafficking in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation in Portugal*. 2007.
- ⁴ Save the Children, 2004. *Explotación Sexual Infantil – Análisis de su situación en España*
- ⁵ US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Accessed from: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/>
- ⁶ Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality. *Trafficking in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation in Portugal*. 2007.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Accessed from: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/>
- ⁹ Committee on the Rights of the Child. *Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties under Article 44 of the Convention: Portugal*. 1998.
- ¹⁰ CECRIA. *Pesquisa sobre Tráfico de Mulheres, Crianças e Adolescentes para Fins de Exploração Sexual*. 2003.
- ¹¹ Anti-Slavery. *Compilation of reports from the Conference on Trafficking of Human Beings and Migration: A human rights approach*. 2005.
- ¹² European Coordination Office. *Europeans and their views on child sex tourism*. July 1998.
- ¹³ “Portugal smashes web ‘porn ring’”. *BBC News*. 15 July 2005.
- ¹⁴ OSCE, 2002. *Country reports submitted to the Informal Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings*.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Gusmaroli, Danielle. “Devil in Designer Clothes,” *Evening Standard - London*. January 2003.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ “Paedophile Ring Focus to Madeleine Hunt”. *Times Online*. 9 May 2007. Accessed from: www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article179019.ece
- ¹⁹ Ibid.



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