



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN THAILAND

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 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 THAILAND

Reliable figures on child victims of trafficking from, through, and within Thailand for sexual exploitation are difficult to obtain. Existing estimates provided by government authorities and others working to combat trafficking in persons do not disaggregate the number of children trafficked from adults. According to the Immigration Bureau Chief of Police, it is estimated that there are about 300 trafficking victims in Thailand per year.³ Between 2003 and 2008, statistics show that around 130 people from Thailand's hilltribe have been rescued from human traffickers.⁴ A survey conducted by the International Organisation for

Migration (IOM) on 548 Cambodian women and children returnees from Thailand⁵ indicates that two percent of the child victims were trafficked for prostitution.⁶ However, 'victims are often unwilling to disclose their identities or file official complaints against traffickers for various reasons, the scale of the problem is likely to be much greater than this'.⁷

Who gets trafficked?

Thailand is considered a hub for sexual exploitation in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. Trafficking in persons for this purpose takes place both within Thailand and across borders.⁸

According to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, numbers of foreign children being trafficked to Thailand for sexual exploitation is on the increase.⁹ They are trafficked from neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam while Thai children are trafficked into sex businesses abroad, such as in Japan and Australia via Malaysia and Hong Kong.¹⁰ For internal trafficking, the majority of the trafficked victims are hilltribe girls aged around 12 to 16 years old from the north and northeastern part of the country. They are usually sent to closed brothels, which operate under prison-like conditions.¹¹

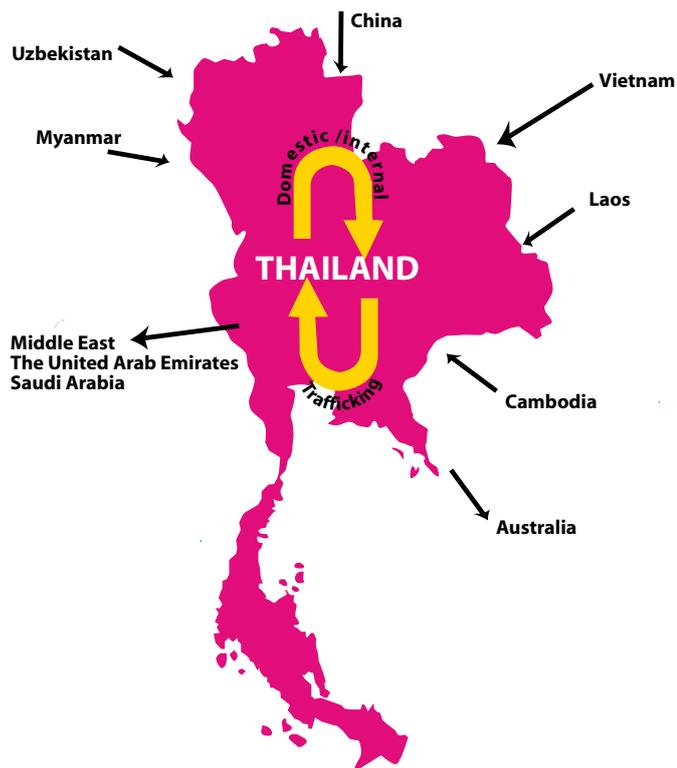
Research on the worst forms of child labour around the Myanmar/Lao border areas conducted by IAS and International Labour Organization/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) in 2001, revealed that some trafficked children are approached by agents or brokers living in their communities. The agents or brokers gained the trust of the children's families as they share the same ethnicity.¹² A study on women and children lured into Thailand indicates that the Mae Sai border in Chiang Rai is used as a main port to receive Burmese women and children lured and trafficked into Thailand for prostitution.¹³

Women and children, mainly from Thailand, are trafficked to countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to be prostitutes or brides.¹⁴

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. 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.



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

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

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. Thailand is a source, transit and destination country for children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. Thai children are also trafficked within Thailand.¹⁵

CASE STUDY:

- In 2005, hilltribe families in different villages in Laos were approached by a group of Lao males who were led by a man named Aunwieng, who promised to find their daughters good jobs in Thailand. The girls' parents received an advance on their daughters' salary of around 20,000 Thai Baht (US\$600) for each girl. The girls were trafficked by boat and entered Thailand illegally. Once they arrived in Thailand, they were passed on to a female Laotian trafficker who forced them into sex work. Initially, they worked at a karaoke bar in Pharn for a few weeks before being trafficked again to another province in Thailand by a Thai male. The victims were eventually rescued by Thai Immigration Police and handed over to a Thai NGO. Although the girls' statements were taken, the case managed to get 'lost' for three years. However, the Thai NGO collaborated with an Australian organisation, which, with a team of prosecutors and Thai police, planned an undercover sting operation. Aunwieng and other traffickers were arrested in March 2009. Another girl was also rescued from one of the traffickers' house in a subsequent raid. It was estimated that around 8 to 10 girls are trafficked each month by this trafficking gang.¹⁶

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 (nationals and foreigners) who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all types of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

CASE STUDY:

- A 51-year-old Italian chef was arrested for the third time by the Thai police for child sexual exploitation. The offender was caught having sex with a 12-year-old boy. The man was arrested for the first time in 2002 for possessing child pornography. His second arrest came on 23 December 2008 while he was with a child under 13 years old in Pattaya.¹⁷

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.

CASE STUDIES

- On 28 February 2009, police arrested four Thais and one Chinese person for luring and trafficking children under the age of 18 for sexual exploitation. The victims were two Chinese girls, aged 16 and 17 years old, who were lured from Kunming, southern China by a trafficker and her son. They were trafficked via Mae Sai District in Chiang Rai before being sold and forced into prostitution in karaoke bars in Chiang Mai.¹⁸
- Keng, a 22 year-old Thai who had a sex change operation to become a woman, trafficked children from the Thailand countryside, Bangkok train stations and from Cambodia and forced them into prostitution, mainly for Western men. A 10-year-old boy she trafficked from Cambodia mentioned that he was forced to provide sexual services to various men. He used the money he earned to play computer games or buy speed to get him through the night. The trafficker was a trafficked victim herself.¹⁹
- Robert Michael Scoble, an Australian, was arrested in Bangkok and charged with trafficking underage boys within Thailand for sex with foreign customers, organising gay sex tours and illegal possession and dissemination of promotional pornographic material. An American suspected of working with him to organise the sex tours was also arrested and charged but his name was not revealed. The arrests were the result of a joint operation conducted by Thai immigration police, Thai tourism authorities, and the Australian Federal Police attached to the Embassy in Bangkok.²⁰

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Government of Thailand needs to ensure full implementation of the anti-trafficking legislation throughout the country. More resources are needed to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges in order to increase the effective investigation and successful prosecution of child trafficking cases.

- Alternative mechanisms/interventions to deportation should be considered and offered to victims of trafficking, especially to countries where they experience hardship. This problem can severely impact stateless people, such as children of ethnic minorities with no birth registration, or refugee children.²¹
- Thailand must ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol) and accelerate implementation of the ASEAN Declaration against Trafficking of Women and Children.²²
- The Government needs to complete the draft *National Policy and Strategy on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism Sector* as a matter of urgency as this will help to tackle the demand side of trafficking of children.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Thailand	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Thailand
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Ratified in 1992	Initial Report – 1996 Second Report – 2004 Next report due April 2009	<p>The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its efforts to provide adequate assistance and social reintegration services for sexually exploited and/or trafficked children in accordance with the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the 1996 and 2001 World Congresses against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.</p> <p>The Committee also recommends that for the State party to combat trafficking, it needs to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective enforcement of the relevant trafficking legislation; Strengthen and expand bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperation programmes with other countries of origin and transit of child trafficking; Ensure that all trafficking cases are investigated and that perpetrators are charged and punished; Ensure that child victims of trafficking are protected and not criminalised as well as provided with adequate recovery and social reintegration services and programmes; Strongly focus on existing risk factors, such as the increasing sex tourism in the region, and continue to collaborate with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and tourism service providers in

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Thailand	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Thailand
			<p>this respect;</p> <p>(f) Continue to raise public awareness about the negative effects of child trafficking and train professionals working with and for children as well as the general public to combat and prevent trafficking in children; and</p> <p>(g) Ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000); and</p> <p>(h) Strengthen cooperation, among others, with the ILO/IPEC, International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organisations.</p>
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Acceded to in 2006	Initial report due 11 February 2008 but has not yet been submitted	N/A
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	Signed in 2001 but not yet ratified	N/A	N/A
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2001	N/A	N/A

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Systematic resource exchange programmes between law enforcement authorities and professionals working with children need to be developed and implemented to enhance their knowledge on child protection issues and ensure the application and implementation of child-sensitive legal procedures are in place and applied throughout the country.
- The Thai Government needs to put more effort into reducing demand for child sex services by engaging and working in close collaboration with the private sector, for example by encouraging the private sector to adopt and implement the Code of Conduct for the tourism and travel industry.
- The Government needs to establish effective mechanisms to monitor the movement of child sex offenders - both locals and foreigners - to increase the protection of children from commercial sexual exploitation, such as the establishment of a child sex offender registry and effective collaboration with relevant authorities in other countries on sharing of this information.
- The Government must take urgent action to address the vulnerability to trafficking of ethnic minorities born in the Thai territory to ensure that all children receive the same rights as other Thai citizens. This includes the needs to improve their accessibility to applying for citizenship, education, health services, social welfare and employment, etc..
- Care services for child victims of trafficking for sexual purposes need to be designed and differentiated from the services provided to adult victims. Capacity building of relevant professionals providing care to child victims, both boys and girls, is urgently needed as a protective and preventive measure.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

- **Phachabodi Hotline Center** (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security): Hotline: 1300, email: call1300@hotmail.com, website: <http://www.call1300.net>
- **The Anti-Trafficking Coordination Unit Northern Thailand** (TRAFCORD): TRAFCORD was established in August 2002 in cooperation with the Coordination Center for Protection of Child and Woman Rights Chiang mai (CPCWRC) in response to the problem of human trafficking in upper Northern Thailand. 24 Hr. Hotline: 087 176 5797
- **The Center for the Protection of Child Rights** (CPCR): an NGO registered in 1997 working to protect and support child victims of forced labour and prostitution, sexual and physical abuse, neglect and trafficking. Tel: 0-2412-1196 , 0-2412-0739 , 0-2864-1421, email: cpcr@internetksc.th.com, website : <http://www.thaichildrights.org/>
- **Saidek 1387** (Child hotline): Hotline: 1387
- **ECPAT International**: protect@ecpat.net ; Tel: 02.215.3388 (available 9:00 – 17:00 M-F)
- **ECPAT Foundation** (Chiang Rai & Northern Provinces): ecpatk@loxinfo.co.th; Tel: 05.375.0167 (available 9:00 – 17:00 M-F)

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

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- ² UNODC, 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ Wongwaikolayoothas, Tossaporn. Hitting the Traffickers. DAILY XPRESS (a supplement copy of THE NATION newspaper), 5 June 2008, p. 6.
- ⁴ Saengpassa, Chularat. Beware of the traffickers. DAILY XPRESS (a supplement copy of THE NATION newspaper), 4 July, 2008, p. 4.
- ⁵ The women and children participated in the program “Return and Reintegration of Trafficked and other vulnerable women and children between selected countries in the Mekong Subregion” between 1 Sept. 2000 and 31 March 2003.
- ⁶ International Organisation for Migration. *Database report on children trafficked from Cambodia to Thailand, November 2003*. Accessed on 19 March from: <http://203.146.233.12/culture/WebTraffickingV2/ShowPub.aspx?pubID=3105>
- ⁷ United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP): Phase III. *SIREN human trafficking data sheet – Thailand (October 2008)*, http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/siren_thailand_data_sheet_oct_08_0109.pdf. Accessed March 2009
- ⁸ UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking/ Thailand. *SIREN human trafficking data sheet – Thailand*. Accessed on 19 March from: http://www.no-trafficking.org/content/SIREN/SIREN_pdf/thailand%20siren%20data%20sheet%20october%202008.pdf
- ⁹ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Thailand*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>
- ¹⁰ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Thailand*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>
- ¹¹ Coalition against Trafficking in Women Asia Pacific. *Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific cited in Factbook – Thailand*. Accessed on 19 March 2009 from: <http://www.catwinternational.org/factbook/Thailand.php>
- ¹² Chantawanich, Supang, Dr. *Presentation of Human Trafficking Research Findings*. Paper presented at the Chiang Rai Workshop on Human Trafficking. 13-14 May 2004. Bangkok: Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister’s office, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Royal Thai Police.
- ¹³ Chantawanich, Supang. *Research on women and children lured into Thailand* (translated title). Paper presented at the Chiang Rai Workshop on Human Trafficking. 13-14 May 2004. Bangkok: Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister’s office, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Royal Thai Police.
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- ¹⁵ U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*.
- ¹⁶ ‘Grey Man and Thai police bust major Laotian Trafficking Ring’. *The Grey Man (TGM)*, 18 March 2009. Accessed on 23 March 2009 from: <http://thegreyman.org/blog/2009/03/grey-man-and-thai-police-bust-major-laotian-trafficking-ring/>
- ¹⁷ Colto in flagrante con un bambino, arrestato per la terza volta un italiano [Caught in the act with a child, an Italian was arrested for the third time]. *Ticinonline SA - Tutti i diritti riservati, 22 January 2009*. Accessed on 20 March from: http://www.tio.ch/aa_pagine_comuni/articolo_interna.asp?idarticolo=439374&idsezione=9&idsito=1&idtipo=2

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- ²² ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Thailand*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>

NOTES



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