

## RESPONDING TO TRAFFICKING

The points below list things that can be done to reduce and stop the suffering caused by trafficking and to deal with traffickers.

- Acknowledge that trafficking in Ireland is generated by demand within Ireland.
- Educate and raise awareness of the effects and causes of trafficking.
- Commit to pray for victims of trafficking and its eradication throughout the world.
- Support efforts to enact victim centred laws which treat those who have been trafficked as victims not as criminals.
- Support efforts to build inter-agency structures based on best practice already established in other countries that protect and support victims – e.g. by granting residence permits, providing safe houses and a culturally sensitive support network for victims.
- Give victims time to recover and not forcibly repatriate them.
- Give support to victims without any pre conditions or requirement to cooperate with Garda investigations.
- Provide practical support and make resources, both financial and human available to assist victims.
- Introduce strong laws against traffickers.
- Cooperate with national and international partnerships to combat and prosecute traffickers.

These points need a commitment and action on many levels. Government must enact legislation, lead policy development and provide resources. Statutory bodies, NGO's and Faith Groups must work to develop support networks and structures. They can also contribute by providing spiritual, human and financial resources. Individuals can become involved, firstly by informing themselves and through supporting the work of other groups through prayer, volunteering, campaigning and by providing financial support.

**DEFINITION:** The trafficking of beings is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people for the purpose of exploitation. This includes persons forced into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

For children exploitation may include also, illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, recruitment as child soldiers, for begging, or for sports (such as child camel jockeys or football players).

Trafficking involves a process of using illicit means such as 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.

### SUGGESTED ACTION

Support the work of Ruhama and the Amnesty International Irish Section – both are involved in Campaigns against trafficking and violence against women - details available on their Web Sites at [www.ruhama.ie](http://www.ruhama.ie) and [www.amnesty.ie](http://www.amnesty.ie)

### REFERENCES

**www.ruhama.ie** Ruhama is a Dublin-based NGO which works with women involved in prostitution. It has an on-going anti-trafficking Campaign.

**www.humantrafficking.org** A web resource for combating Trafficking – gives country by country information.

**www.amnesty.ie** Amnesty International Irish Section. At present Amnesty is running a campaign highlighting violence against women – trafficking is part of this violence.

**http://www.catwinternational.org** The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is a non-governmental organisation that promotes women's human rights by working internationally to combat sexual exploitation in all its forms

**Google Search** for "Sex trafficking supply and demand" – will link to a power point slide show by D M Hughes Phd of the University of Rhode Island. This gives a good overview of all aspects of trafficking for the sex trade.

#### Books:

This Immoral Trade - Slavery in the 21st Century, *Caroline Cox & Dr John Marks.*

The Natasha's, *Victor Malarek.*

Sex in the City – The Prostitution Racket in Ireland, *Paul Reynolds.*

#### New Resources:

Liturgy resources focusing on the injustices of the trafficking of women have been prepared by the Cork Campaign to Stop Sex Trafficking. These have already been distributed in Cork and Kerry Dioceses. The issue will be highlighted on Sunday 15th of July. Copies of resource materials can be had on request. An information pack for schools is in the process of being prepared.

### PRAYER TO END TRAFFICKING

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of women and children deceived and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse because of human greed and profit at this time in our world.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being transgressed through threats, deception, and force.

We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.

Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted. Make real your promises to fill those being trafficked with a love that is tender and good and send the exploiters away empty handed.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with them, that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

**S. Gen Cassani, SSND**

ISSUE 10  
2007

# Cois Tine

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## TRAFFICKING

Human Trafficking causes unimaginable misery and suffering to those who are dehumanised, forced to become commodities that are bought, sold, used and abused. This issue focuses solely on this topic, especially the trafficking of Women. Reading the definition of trafficking given on page four will no doubt send shivers down the spine of many readers. What is even more chilling is the fact that trafficking is not very far from our own doors.

"What is at stake in the issue of human trafficking is our core spiritual belief that every human person is of infinite worth and dignity, not a commodity to be bought and sold for profit in an underground marketplace. Human trafficking is a grating cry in our time that implicates all of society. Our actions matter as to whether or not we re-claim, as members of our human family, those lost and in bondage to trafficking." (From a presentation on trafficking given by Clare Nolan a Good Shepherd Sister)

When referring to the victims of trafficking a statement of the Irish Bishops Conference says: "We all have a serious Christian obligation to care for those who have become trapped in this way". This Newsletter seeks to inform readers and to point to the response that we as people with a mission to love one another and to welcome the stranger in our midst are called on to make.

*"No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."* Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

Slavery is something that we have mentally assigned to distant lands and to the distant past. It conjures up images of Africans on slave-ships heading to America or the West Indies four hundred years ago. It touches Ireland only in the sense that in school we learned St. Patrick was a slave and that he was, in today's terminology, trafficked into Ireland in 432ad.

But it still goes on. It is estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, 80% of victims are female and 50% are children. They are forced into slave labour in industry, agriculture as servants; many bought and sold are sexually abused and forced into prostitution. Victims are mainly children and women from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Focusing on Africa alone reports from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Senegal and Mauritania which indicate that trafficking both within and across their borders is common. The number of people involved is staggering.

In 2006 Ireland was mentioned for the first time ever in an annual report issued by the US Government called the "Trafficking in Persons Report". It states: "There are reports...which suggest that Ireland is a transit and destination country for a significant number of trafficking victims from Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, or Asia. Unaccompanied minors from various source countries, particularly in Africa, represent a vulnerable group

in Ireland that is susceptible to trafficking and exploitation."

Researching this issue of Cois Tine Newsletter was a depressing exercise during which it became very clear that the hope expressed in the quotation from the Declaration of Human Rights above is far from being realised. The statistics given above are shocking and many more harrowing facts, stories and figures can be found simply by searching for "Trafficking" on the internet. Slavery still exists and human trafficking is only one of its many forms.

**If you would like us to post or email you a copy of the Cois Tine Newsletter please provide contact details by phoning 021 4557760 or by emailing [coistine@sma.ie](mailto:coistine@sma.ie)**



## JOURNEY OF HOPE TO LIVING HELL

Traffickers target the poor and the desperate. They offer parents a way out of debt. They promise parents that their children will have a better life, education a better home etc. Adults are sometimes kidnapped or are attracted by offers of a job. An ad in a local paper, or on the internet offers attractive employment as, domestic workers, secretaries, child-minders, models etc. all wonderful alternatives to a hopeless existence. Sometimes victims are approached by agents or middlemen who paint a picture of bright opportunities.

Sabriana was introduced to a man called Yani by a neighbour in her village as someone who would help her to a better life in Western Europe. She would earn good money, have a new life and be able to send money home to her elderly mother and father. She agreed to pretend to be married to the man and went with him using false documents he procured. But what began as a journey of hope soon became a living hell.

As soon as she reached London she was beaten and abused, she was locked up, told she would be put in jail if the police caught her. Yani forced her to sell sex. Foolishly she hoped for the best because she did not want to believe that it could get worse. It did when Yani sold her to another man and she had to work in brothels and clubs. Without documents escape was almost impossible, **she was controlled through a combination of promises, lies, threats and violence. She was even told that her parents would be killed if she tried to escape.** Months later she was sold on again and was moved to Dublin from where she was regularly sent to "visit" provincial towns. After a severe beating Sabriana decided she had to get out. She escaped and arrived in a Garda Station afraid, bruised, with broken ribs and teeth.

**Sabriana's saga is not yet over. She is now in the asylum process. She lives in fear that the "owner" who beat her will find her again. She fears being deported and also that her parents will suffer because of her escape.**

It is estimated that over 400,000 women and girls are trafficked into and within Europe every year. Sabriana is one of the many who's suffering and misery is unimaginable.



## BISHOPS STATEMENT

*In response to the growing awareness of trafficking in Ireland the Bishops conference issued a statement on the 18 June 2006. The main points of this statement are quoted below.*

The grave issue of human trafficking is a matter of great concern. The recruitment, transfer and sale of vulnerable people – women, children and men is a gross violation of human rights.

Trapped through various forms of coercion or deception, trafficked persons are kept restrained by their captors, frequently under appalling conditions. They are powerless to escape. In this "trade", human life is reduced to a commodity. Exact numbers are impossible to estimate as this problem is kept hidden. However, reports indicate that this ranks third among organised transnational crime, after drugs and firearms. Recent reporting confirms that we should be concerned about the numbers of people who are trafficked to Ireland.

We would hope that all concerned people in this country will assist in finding a means to eradicate this immoral and criminal behaviour. **We all have a serious Christian obligation to care for those who have become trapped in this way....** We would not wish to see Ireland fall short of our moral and political responsibilities regarding this issue. We call on the Government to ratify, implement and incorporate into domestic law the following:

- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (UN Convention 2002, Palermo);
- The Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005); *(signed by the Irish Government on April 13th 2007)*
- The EU directives relating to Trafficking.

**It is a matter of urgency that legislation be put in place which regards the trafficked person as the innocent party,** and which strengthens criminal proceedings against traffickers. It is important that Ireland co-operates fully in international efforts to address this modern form of slavery



## The Irish CAUSE - The hidden EFFECT.

During the past decade we have become proud to be Irish and of our ability to overcome economic and social problems that plagued us in the past. Trafficking for the sake of sexual exploitation is a blight on this progress and is to a large extent, a hidden crime. Because of its secretive nature it is hard to gauge the exact extent of trafficking. However, Ruhama an NGO working with victims of sexual exploitation has documented the cases of over two hundred women who were enslaved within the last decade. In addition during the last four years the Dublin office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) assisted in cases where there have been indications of trafficking to Ireland from Romania, Moldova, Croatia, Brazil, Nigeria, Zambia and DR Congo. No doubt there are many more cases that go unnoticed and there is evidence that trafficking into Ireland is increasing due to a growing demand.

Some of these causes of trafficking are obvious. Traffickers are attracted by the huge profits it generates, as were the slave traders of the past. However, other causes are hidden more deeply. We have to face up to a harsh reality that this crime against humanity is fuelled by Irish people who are willing to exploit and abuse other human beings for their own gratification or for profit. While the wealth of the Celtic Tiger has brought many benefits it has also brought an increase in lap-dancing clubs, massage parlours, escort agencies, sex chat lines, pornography, web sites etc. All of these indicate **a demand in Ireland that is fuelling, and causing the trafficking of human beings.**

This fact remains hidden because it is at odds both with our new modern image and the Christian heritage brought to Ireland by the slave Patrick so long ago. Illogically attention is often focused on condemning the victims rather than the perpetrators. The perpetrators are not just "foreign" traffickers but also those who create the demand for trafficked women. Irish people who support, use or profit from the "sex industry" in any of the forms mentioned above are also a causal link in the chain that enslaves fellow human beings.

The logic of the sentiments expressed in an Australian anti-trafficking campaign poster cannot be denied. It said; "Stop punishing the women and start focusing on the men who create the demand. There should be no room in any society for the buying and selling of women and children's bodies."

The contribution of Irish men to trafficking needs to be talked about and taken out of the closet. Acknowledging the existence of this issue and raising awareness of the causes and effects of trafficking are a necessary first step in reducing the demand for victims in Ireland and to finding a means to eradicate this immoral and criminal behaviour.

## VICTIMS FIRST

The Statement of the Irish Bishops on Trafficking made a year ago called, as a matter of urgency, for the introduction of legislation that would not only strengthen criminal proceedings against traffickers but which would "regard the trafficked person as the innocent party". In April this year Ireland signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. This development is a welcome first step but, as yet, laws have not been passed and Ireland remains the only European country that does not have any legislation in place criminalising trafficking and providing protection for victims.

In addition to suitable laws Ireland also lacks the policies and support structures for victims of trafficking. These need to be developed and like legislation they too must be victim centred. Their primary role must be the protection of victims so that they will have the confidence to break away from the traffickers who control them through fear and coercion.

Elsewhere in this issue we told the story of Sabriana and of how she escaped. Not all victims have her courage or have not reached the level of desperation that makes them overcome the fear of imprisonment, deportation or of being caught and punished by their abusers. Victims need to know that if they do report to the authorities that they will be protected and not be re-victimised by being treated as criminals or as illegal aliens who will be deported. Good legislation, policies and a place of safety would greatly assist their recovery and also make breaking out a less daunting prospect.

Building the structures that would allow this to happen is the most humane and caring way of meeting the Christian obligation we have to care for those who have become trapped and enslaved by trafficking.

**"During the 1980's alone more women and children were enslaved by trafficking than all the people sold into slavery from Africa during the 400 years of slave trade!"**

Irish Missionary Union Newsletter

