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5/8/09

SEX TRAFFICKING

Imagine, if you will, the following scenario: Nineteen year old Monica, from Romania, was elated when her boyfriend said he arranged a job for her as a waitress in Italy. She planned to work for a year and then put the money towards their wedding. Monica was taken to the Vila Bar in Bosnia. She was then led upstairs to a bedroom where another Romanian girl named Elena explained the routine. Her shift would last from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m, during which time she would have to dance and service up to eight clients a night. Monica was disgusted and outraged at the betrayal. Her boyfriend had sold her for 3000 Deutsh Marks, which is around 1000 dollars. Monica was filled with hope when Elena told her that many foreign soldiers and policemen came there as clients. She told many of them that there had been a mistake. Monica said, "Of course I appealed to them for help, but all of them said that they shouldn't be there and would get into trouble if they helped." Monica was trapped in the world of sex slavery that has taken the rights of countless women across the globe. The issue of sex slavery and trafficking are rarely brought up even though it is an issue that affects millions of people around the world. An estimated two million women and children are held in sexual servitude throughout the world (C). There are many things we can do to try to help end this problem, even as simple as standing up and speaking out.

"Child sexual exploitation is the most hidden form of child abuse in the U.S. and North America today. It is the world's least realized epidemic" according to Richard J. Estes, author of The commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in U.S., Canada, and Mexico (A). People all over the world are being sold, kidnapped, and tricked into the sex

trade. Of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked across international annually, 80 percent are women and 50 percent are children (A). While awareness of this issue is growing, many people believe that it is only a third world problem or an issue that just affects the poor. In reality, sexual exploitation is not limited to a particular racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group. In fact, the U.S. is a major trafficking destination; America gets a good majority of their sexual slaves from Mexico (A). Many victims are runaways, migrants, oppressed or marginalized groups, and come from poor countries. Traffickers are drawn to these types because they are the easiest to recruit or control. Many get solicited by pimps or forced, so that they can acquire necessities to survive on the street. Undocumented immigrants are highly vulnerable and easy to get, due to the lack of legal status/protection and limited language (B). These people are being forced or deceived into a scenario that they can't get out of. Traffickers are able to take advantage of immigrants; and get away with it because the law won't protect them.

The lack of law or law enforcement makes it easier for people to conduct sex slavery. The UN (United Nations) has the Human Rights Declaration (1984) that has articles that apply to the trafficking of women and children.

ARTICLE 3 _ Guarantees the right to be free from physical violence; rape, sexual violence and trafficking. "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." The Reality: The brutality of traffickers cruel, inhuman and infamous. Once a victim is snared in this nightmare, there is no such thing as a right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 4 _ Guarantees freedom from slavery. "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all forms." _The Reality: Sex trafficking is now identified as a modern form of slavery by which victims are tricked, lured or kidnapped into enslavement. The practice utilizes the debt bond system, the classic hallmark of the slave system, which saddles the victim with a huge debt, which they never agreed to. Their freedom is linked to

paying off this debt, which is essentially, never paid off forcing victims to work in slave conditions with no recourse.

ARTICLE 5 _ Guarantees the bodily integrity and security of a person. "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." _ The Reality: The very nature of forced prostitution of women and children is cruel and inhuman punishment, which few ever recover from. The UN estimates that there are over 1,000,000 victims presently enslaved by organized crime, other agencies double that figure (A).

Even though by law no one is allowed to participate in the Human slavery of any kind, traffickers have found their ways around it.

Traffickers can include pimps, brothel owners, family operations, small businesses, and international organized operations (A). Traffickers lure victims by preying on their hopes to improve their lives, and lives of their families. Promised a better life, good job, loving relationship, or new exciting opportunities. Traffickers may use ruses like a modeling job to lure their victims. Also, victims may be kidnapped or sold, by a parent or loved one. In underdeveloped countries most sex exploitation takes place in brothels. In America and North America, sex trafficking is mostly disguised as something else; Asian or European massage parlors, salons, strip clubs, and cantina bars all provide covers for these operations (A). It can also be seen in the form of domestic street prostitution, escort agencies, and underground brothels. You can see how prevalent this issue is when you realize all the cover operations that hide this industry.

According to the Captive Daughters website "The cause of sex trafficking is the demand for it; just like arms and drug trafficking, human trafficking exists to meet the demand" (A). The demand for sex trafficking is mostly men who buy sexual services or consumer goods (like video or porn) created by trafficked people. Hundreds of thousands

of girls ranging from all ages; from teenage to as young as age five are susceptible to this (D). Due to the demand for the young children, more people are being dragged into this business. The children are getting their youth taken from them because many people have a preference for them.

Human trafficking is the third most lucrative criminal activity after illegal drugs and black market guns, generating 9.5 billion in annual revenue (E). Many places in the world in bad economic conditions, especially rural, depend financially and are fuelled by sex trafficking. Sex tourism is the biggest supporter of the trade. Sex tourists are travelers who have a clear sexual preference for children, and go to those countries for those specific reasons. They may also be tourists who use the “why not” or “when in Rome” approach to justify their actions. Also the fear of contracting AIDs through unprotected sex with older prostitutes has increased demands for virgins and young children (A). It is sad how these countries must depend financially on the exploitation of children to survive. They put people through these tragic circumstances, just so they can make money. This shows how severe this problem is and how much we need to change it.

Although we could never cease the demand of sexual trafficking, there are many ways that we can all get involved in the fight against sex slavery. The UN could increase penalties associated with sexual crimes, especially against children. That way, the traffickers would see and maybe be scared, and will stop. We could also increase law enforcement on already enacted laws against human sex slavery, like the UN Human Rights Declaration. As an individual, there are many things we could do to support the end of sex trafficking.

The most important thing you could do is to raise awareness about the topic.

Educating your friends, family, and community is a huge help. The more people who know about it, the more support and voices you can garner to join the fight to end sex slavery.

You can do this by: showing a film on the issue; forming your own anti- trafficking group to raise awareness in your area; providing speakers on the issue; talking to your friends and telling them of all the horrors sex trafficking entails; or you could start by signing this petition.

If you're more aggressive you can write to your local, state, and national representatives and ask what they are doing about the issue. You could also write company CEO's of other countries about your concerns for trafficking women and children.

The huge issue of sex slavery is a much understated one that affects millions of people all throughout the world. There are many laws that make it illegal, yet it is still happening. There is no clear-cut solution that will automatically end this horrendous issue, but there are many ways we can work towards stopping it. The most important being speaking out and voicing your opinion. That is the only way this issue will begin changing and moving in the right direction. Educate one person on this international issue and you will be a part of the fight against sex trafficking.

Annotated Bibliography

SOURCE A

<http://www.captive Daughters.org/>

The Captive Daughters website is a non profit organization committed to ending the practice of sex trafficking, particularly focused on little girls and women. This site has so much information that is valuable to my project. The site explains the cause and demand for sex trafficking, the different people and countries that it affects, The UN laws against it, solutions, ways you can help as a person, and much more. This website gave me many facts and articles that I could use to support my claims in my essay. This organizations intent is to educate you on all the horrors sex trafficking posses, and that's exactly what it did.

SOURCE B

<http://www.polarisproject.org/?gclid=CNYd1ommx5oCRFwpawodWVih2g>

The Polaris Project website was made to inform people on the many different types of human slavery in the world today. It is a large anti trafficking program in the United States and Japan; it is one of the few programs working on all forms of human trafficking. This website also gave me really good information and facts. It had information on the different ways traffickers cover up their operations, who the traffickers are, what kind of people is normally victims, how traffickers lure their victims, and some really useful facts.

SOURCE C

Roberts, Sue Lloyd (Sunday June 26 2002). "Boys will be boys". BBC news.com

This article was about the personal experience of a Romanian woman named Monica who was sold into the world of sex slavery. Her boyfriend sold her for 3000 Duetsch marks which is about 1000. She was horrified by the fact that she was stuck doing the most disgusting thing she could think of. She was stuck in a brothel in Bosnia where no one would help her. She said that there were many foreign soldiers and police men, though none of them would help her because they said they weren't supposed to be there and would get in trouble. This article was basically about the way men act and how they wouldn't even help a woman in need, because they didn't want to look bad.

SOURCE D

<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

This website was the Child Exploitation and Obscenity section (CEOS); it gave me some basic facts about how many people are bought, sold, forced across the world into human slavery. It also gave me information on the age range of people who are sexually trafficked, from women in their thirties to as young as five. The website also talked about how sex trafficking is also domestic and involves minors who are runaways or homeless. They go on to say that this is a growing issue that is very important, and that we need to stop it. Federal law has the tools to bring those who commit these crimes to justice; all we have to do is enforce the laws.

SOURCE E

<http://globalfundforwomen.org/cms/hot-topics/trafficking/trafficking/html>

This website talks about how sex trafficking is modern day slavery; mostly women and children are abducted or sold into the trade. It includes buying, selling, and trading human beings. The website goes on to talk about how this is an international problem. It also talks about how sex slavery is a very lucrative business that helps out low income countries. It is the third most lucrative criminal activity after illegal drugs and black market guns. It explains that the root call of trafficking include poverty violence and political conflict.