



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

**SEDUCTION, SALE and SLAVERY:
TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN & CHILDREN
FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Regional Office for Southern Africa**

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FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

The issue of trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children, is not a new development by any means in Southern Africa. Like elsewhere in the world, it has a history and roots that go way back. What is new is that it is becoming better known. The present research survey, undertaken by IOM over a relatively short period uncovered graphic details of how pervasive and dangerous this trade can be. Tempted by needs, hopes and dreams, victims encounter their traders who in turn are driven by profit, an often violent need to possess - plus a will to deceive, exploit and violate in order to get it.

As this report was launched in its condensed "Overview and Findings" version in Pretoria on 24 March 2003, it generated a significant amount of publicity in all media, and not only in South Africa, but also in Europe and America. Calls came from people near and far, expressing support, interest, and - criticism. Predictably, also some threats. The challenge now is that with this full report, communities, states, media and civil society find common ground on how to combat this increasing market, and the resulting trauma, terror and bring solace to destroyed lives.

Amidst wars, conflicts, diseases and poverty around us every day - we must not forget that trafficking in human beings is happening right under our noses. Indeed, the fact that a Pretoria newspaper on 8 April 2003 put a local news story on trafficking of Chinese women on the front page so prominently that the attack on Baghdad was dwarfed in comparison, gives cause for hope.

As a short research survey goes, this one has uncovered a whole range of findings that will hopefully engage Governments, and intrigue others, into action in combating crime, often organized, - or in rendering victim support. And not just in Southern Africa, but also in destination countries overseas. As a global migration organization, IOM has a mission to help, and we intend to do so, now, with the support of donors and other role players.

I thank the research team and present and former IOM colleagues who have rendered them guidance and support in their endeavour, the editors, the layout designers, as well as the media - in particular the SABC 'Special Assignment' TV production, interviewees in Governments, law enforcement and civil society, for their assistance, interest and publicity. And the victims who spoke up.

The most hidden aspect of this trade in bodies, regardless of origin or of gender or the purpose of the trade, is that within these bodies reside human beings with hopes, dreams, emotions and ambitions - and even a sense of justice; justice which so often eludes them when it matters most.

This work we dedicate to them.

H.P. Boe
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The Rock Art Institute, University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, generously contributed the cover photograph of the San rock painting that comes from South Africa’s Eastern Cape province. It depicts a procession of human figures, traversing the spirit world along a thin red line. The thin red line was seen as a thread of light that connected different tiers of the cosmos. San shamans or spiritual leaders, while experiencing altered states of consciousness, would travel along these lines into the spiritual world where they performed tasks such as controlling game, making rain and healing the sick.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASI	Anti-Slavery International
BIA	Blantyre International Airport
CBD	Central Business District
DHA	Department of Home Affairs (South Africa)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IMP	International Migration Programme
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JIA	Johannesburg International Airport
LIA	Lilongwe International Airport
LCCU	Lesotho Child Counselling Unit
MIDSA	Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMP	Southern African Migration Project
SAPS	South African Police Service
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US-INS	United States Immigration and Naturalization Service
ZAR	South African Rand

PROLOGUE

Baartman was made to parade naked along a 'stage two feet high, along which she was led by her keeper and exhibited like a wild beast, being obliged to walk, stand or sit as he ordered'....she was depicted as a wild animal in a cage, dancing for her keeper (Insane Tree Promotions).

Saartjie Baartman was a twenty-one year old South African Griqua woman employed as a servant on a farm near Cape Town. Already past the traditional age of marriage among her people, and with few, if any, prospects or opportunities to improve her condition, when a visiting English surgeon, Dr. William Dunlop, promised her fame, fortune, and freedom in a far away land, Baartman readily accepted his offer, and traveled with him to London by ship in 1810.

What awaited her in London was neither fame nor fortune nor freedom, and the doctor had had something quite different in mind. Fascinated by her elongated labia and large buttocks, neither of which were uncommon physical features for the people of the Cape, Dunlop chose to exhibit her in the nude in front of endless crowds of Londoners, who paid one shilling apiece to gawk at the "Hottentot Venus" from Africa.

Whether Baartman herself received any of the profits of her exploitation is doubtful. Without family or friends, or the linguistic and socio-cultural skills of Europe that she needed to defend herself, she later turned to prostitution in order to survive. When she died, abandoned and alone in France, only six years after leaving Cape Town, her body was dissected, her skeleton was removed, and her brain and genitals were pickled and displayed as curiosities in the *Musee de l'Homme* in Paris for the next 160 years (Davie, 2002).

With the surge of publicity that accompanied an official request by then-President Nelson Mandela to have the remains of Saartjie Baartman returned to South Africa in 1994, her story may be the most notorious case of African trafficking never to have been named as such, but her experience of recruitment by deception and cross-border transportation for sexual exploitation is one common to millions of women and children worldwide (Marquis, 2003: A3). Typically lured by promises of well-paying jobs abroad, many victims willingly accept the services offered by human traffickers without realising the full nature of their future employment, or the conditions in which they will work. Once firmly trapped within an illegal migration environment, and disadvantaged by their foreign surroundings, they are forced into sex work, or other forms of bonded labour, to earn profits for their traffickers. Victims of trafficking are prevented from escaping by security guards, violence or threats of violence, by having their identity documents withheld, and very often, by their unfamiliarity with a foreign environment.

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TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN & CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

▪ General Overview

Saartjie Baartman is one of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of women and children who have been trafficked to, from, and through the African continent for at least a hundred years, and for considerably longer if the African slave trade to the Americas can be considered a prelude to the contemporary trafficking phenomenon. Although the slave trade depended primarily on wars, raids, and other chaotic theatres of forced abduction, and contemporary trafficking relies to a greater extent on deception and false promises, with both practices, the victim's exploitation was and is facilitated largely by her relocation from a place with which she is familiar to one with which she is not.

For the same reason that plantation owners in the Americas preferred slaves from distant Africa, expecting their displacement and resultant disorientation to limit their options, and deter escape, so too do modern traffickers prefer to exploit their victims far from home. Most absorbing for historians, perhaps, is the similarity with respect to the scale of the trades. Between 1540 and 1850, an estimated 15 million Africans were transported to the Americas, while some recent estimates indicate that as many as four million women and children are trafficked worldwide every year (Marquis, 2003: A3).

Conducted over a period of seven months, from August 2002 until February 2003, IOM's research assessment of human trafficking in Southern Africa reveals a diverse range of trafficking activity, from the well-known global operations of Chinese Triad societies and Russian and Bulgarian mafias that touch this region as an afterthought, to the local land-border trade in African women and children. The focus of this paper tends towards these latter – the trafficking of Africans, by Africans, within and out of Southern Africa – about which little is known, and less has been written.

▪ Definitions

For the purposes of this research study, IOM has relied on the definition of trafficking in persons that is provided in the Optional Protocol to the *United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime*. Article 3 of the Protocol reads as follows:

(a) “Trafficking in Persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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 or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Despite the apparent wide scope of the UN definition, the range of related criminal activities occurring in Southern Africa often challenged IOM researchers to identify them as human trafficking in the absence of another name for them. At the same time, the research team has been reluctant to follow the global tendency to interpret the trafficking definition too broadly out of a concern that an overly-broad reading, and an attempt to cluster an assortment of other crimes within a trafficking definition may ultimately result in distracting assistance designed for the unique plight of victims of a more narrowly defined ‘trafficking’.

▪ **Background**

In Southern Africa, documentation is scarce but persistent, and suggests that human trafficking as a contemporary form of slavery has existed for at least a century between Southern Africa and Europe, and within Southern Africa itself. At the turn of the 19th century, young women were being trafficked into Cape Town from Europe as part of, but distinguishable from, an increased flow of European prostitutes to the city (van Heyningen, 1984:186; Bristow, 1977:173). Others were trafficked to South African mines in response to the demand by white mineworkers for European women (Bristow, 1977:181). In 1966, *Jeune Afrique* reported that some 6, 000 young African girls were being trafficked to Europe each year, and that many of these ended up as sex slaves in French ports (Barlay, 1968:32). In 1990, Anti-Slavery International (ASI) confirmed that children from Mozambique were being trafficked into South Africa where they were sold as “sex chattels” (Vines, 1991), and a year later, ASI noted fifteen cases of young women and girl children who had been trafficked from Mozambique into South Africa, primarily as concubines for South African men (McKibbin, 1992). Most recently, Cape Town-based NGO, Molo Songololo, published one of the first in-depth studies of the trafficking phenomenon in South Africa, noting that victims trafficked into South Africa included women and children from all corners of the African continent, and abroad (Molo Songololo, 2000:21).

▪ **Vulnerabilities**

Despite its rising profile in many parts of the world, and periodic efforts made to raise public awareness to the problem in Southern Africa, the region remains fertile ground for traffickers who easily capitalize on the vulnerabilities created by war, endemic poverty, minimal education, unemployment, and a general lack of opportunity for much of the region’s population. For women, vulnerabilities are particularly acute, with many having been ‘sexualized’ and/or ‘commoditized’ as young girls within the context of cultural practices that challenge their sexual integrity. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is also having its impact, leaving many widows, or orphan-headed households; often teenagers who must provide for a number of younger siblings. Not to be discounted is the effect the region’s on-going food crisis has had in

exacerbating the vulnerabilities of households, so that it is not uncommon to read stories in the press about parents who have sold their children to passers-by, believing that nowhere could the conditions be worse than here (Peta, 2002).

But poverty, unemployment, or lack of opportunity are not sufficient conditions for trafficking to occur; a criminal syndicate is also typically present to exploit the latent vulnerabilities they create, and so into this tumult steps the trafficker who, like Dr. William Dunlop did in 1810, offers an escape with realistic promises of opportunities abroad. For communities in Southern Africa having to deal with difficult or desperate circumstances, migration seems a natural solution, particularly since so many have returned from South Africa fashionably dressed, with stories of wealth and opportunity to be had in the City of Gold.*

▪ **Organized Crime and Law Enforcement**

The range of organized criminal activity in Southern Africa is vast, with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reporting in 1999 that as many as 500 organized criminal groups were operating in South Africa at the time, many with African and global networks which facilitate the cross-border flow of illegal goods and people (Gastrow, 1999). Some of the more notorious, such as the West Africa/Nigerian networks, Chinese Triad societies, and the Russian and Bulgarian mafia, are known to manage global trafficking empires, while other, ethnically-coherent enterprises operate on a smaller scale, using their comparative advantage to traffic women and children across a particular border where they have developed a network of official and unofficial contacts.

It is not known how much human trafficking profits organized crime in Southern Africa, but the conservative global estimate is approximately US\$7 billion per year, making the trade one of the largest sources of profit for organized crime worldwide; only drug trafficking and the weapons trade may be more lucrative (Miko, 2000). While penalties for drug trafficking and weapons smuggling tend to be severe, many countries have yet to criminalize trafficking in persons, despite the obvious consequence of failing to do so.

The money made from the sexual exploitation and often enslavement of trafficked women enriches transnational criminal networks. Trafficking in women has arguably the highest profit margin and lowest risk of almost any type of illegal activity (Hughes, 2000:9).

The recurrent civil and political unrest and gross economic disparities that characterize Southern Africa have long generated a potent mix of push and pull factors that, when coupled with borders so porous as to be nearly irrelevant, have ensured a consistent southward flow of documented and undocumented migrants. In most cases, victims of trafficking are a nearly indistinguishable part of these flows, typically displaced from their communities or motivated by dreams of stability and prosperity abroad. The women and children that are lured by traffickers are not particularly naïve, nor are the choices they make necessarily foolish, and yet the exploitation they endure is severe. Many are trapped by unexpected debt that they are forced to pay off in the sex industry, while for others, there is no pretence of debt; they are slaves, forced into sex work for the financial and/or physical benefit of their masters. In either case, their working hours are long, their right to refuse clients limited, and their freedom of movement non-existent.

Most countries in Southern Africa have yet to ratify the Trafficking Protocol, and the absence of domestic anti-trafficking legislation offers law enforcement little incentive to pursue the criminal syndicates responsible for the activity. Indeed, in much of the region, law enforcement officials are unable to distinguish between human trafficking, which concludes with the continued exploitation of the victim,

* i.e. Johannesburg

and human smuggling, where a client pays a smuggler to assist him with an undocumented border crossing. Typically, police and immigration officials who do identify trafficking victims are required to treat them within an illegal immigration regime that offers immediate deportation as its primary solution. Southern Africa also offers little in the way of rehabilitative support for trafficked women and children, and the illegal status of most victims gives them little motivation to seek it. Many shelters for battered women in South Africa, for example, require that an applicant produce a South African Identity Document before she is allowed access.

Many countries beyond Southern Africa are increasingly concerned by the excessive human rights violations inherent in the exploitation of trafficking victims, as well as substantial profits such exploitation delivers to criminal syndicates, and are implementing legislation aimed at preventing the trade, protecting the victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators. This is an example that the countries of Southern Africa should follow.

▪ **Objectives and Strategic Framework: Limits and Methodology**

The impetus for this research was the IOM-sponsored Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) programme. Initiated by IOM and its partners¹ in 1999, MIDSA aims to provide a forum for senior officials from the member-states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to discuss migration issues of common concern. In March 2001, delegates to the MIDSA Workshop in Gaborone, Botswana, identified as a pressing need an assessment on trafficking in persons in the region, and it was pursuant to this request, that IOM's Regional Office for Southern Africa proposed its six-month Research Study on Trafficking in the SADC Region, which was eventually financed through IOM's own funding mechanism.

Given the quick-impact nature of the six-month assessment, and the impression created by several Southern African-based NGOs that an ambitious assistance programme was needed sooner rather than later, IOM narrowed the parameters of its research to consider the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation only. Although there is considerable evidence suggesting the existence of trafficking for other kinds of forced labour, and of men, IOM targeted its assessment on trafficking for sexual exploitation of women and children largely because of the extreme vulnerability of such victims, its highly abusive and dehumanizing nature, and the Organization's global expertise in responding to this form of trafficking. IOM chose to focus further on the practice of cross-border trafficking, where the Organization has some comparative advantage, rather than include in-country trafficking with which a number of local NGOs, such as South Africa's Molo Songololo, have substantial experience and a considerable field presence.

At the outset, IOM assumed that South Africa was the primary country of destination for victims of trafficking in the region, given its pockets of extreme wealth, its first class financial and transportation infrastructure, and the growing influence of organized crime. As a research strategy, then, IOM researchers planned to spend three months in four of South Africa's major cities – Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Pretoria – identifying and interviewing victims and other sources whose stories could then be traced back along the trafficking routes to the source countries in the Southern African region. During the second phase of the research, IOM intended to locate source communities in the region to assess the reasons for, and extent of their vulnerability. While this two-part strategy proved successful for the most part, some flexibility was required, and the researchers were often required to return to South Africa during the second phase to fill gaps in the data. As a result, field researchers concentrated on Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Swaziland, at the expense of other countries equally deserving of study, such as Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, but about which information was

¹ I.e. The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP); International Migration Programme (IMP); and United States' Immigration and Naturalization Service (US – INS).

uncovered in South Africa much later. Since the project began in August 2002, IOM has conducted 232 interviews and identified 25 victims, the first of these in October, with the number multiplying exponentially with every succeeding month.

The report that follows is divided into two parts. The first part, 'the Trafficking in African Women and Children', focuses on Refugee Trafficking in South Africa, Child Trafficking from Lesotho, Trafficking from Southern Mozambique, and Malawi as a Source Country. The second part, 'Extra-Regional Trafficking into South Africa', looks at the Trafficking of Thai, Chinese, and Eastern European Women to South Africa. In each chapter, a trafficking flow is discussed in terms of the conditions contributing to the particular vulnerability of the victim, the recruitment strategies employed by the trafficker, the transportation routes and methods, the end result sexual exploitation and the pressures and mechanisms used to control her. The report concludes with a brief narrative summary, followed by IOM's principal findings and recommendations.

Carried out over a six-month period, beginning in August 2002 and ending in February 2003, this research study does not aim to provide a comprehensive picture of human trafficking in Southern Africa, but rather attempts to construct a snapshot of the trade to which IOM and others may add with future research and operational efforts, and supplemented by recommendations that governments in the region may wish to consider.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the surge of publicity that accompanied an official request by then-President Nelson Mandela to have the remains of Saartjie Baartman returned to South Africa in 1994, her story may be the most notorious case of African trafficking never to have been named as such, but Saartjie Baartman's experience of recruitment by deception and cross-border transportation for sexual exploitation is one common to millions of women and children worldwide.

Southern Africa hosts a diverse range of human trafficking activities, from the global operations of Chinese triad groups and Russian 'mafia', to the local trade in persons across land borders perpetrated by local syndicates. The region's young women and children are especially vulnerable to the recruitment tactics of traffickers because civil unrest and economic deprivation leave them with few opportunities at home, and makes migration a natural and common solution. South Africa, as the region's most prosperous country, is a credible and appealing lure. As an historical magnet for job-seekers in Southern Africa, its porous borders make it the obvious destination for migrants and asylum-seekers and, when coupled with a flourishing sex industry, for traffickers as well.

From August 2002 to February 2003, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a research study of the trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation in Southern Africa. The methodology was based primarily on interviews with trafficking victims, sex workers, traffickers, police and government officials, grassroots NGOs, and the media. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)'s *Special Assignment* programme was responsible in large part for documenting and researching the cases and trends of trafficking in Mozambique. Elsewhere, IOM researchers conducted 232 interviews, twenty-five of these with trafficked women and children from eleven countries.

The major findings may be summarized as follows:

- Refugees are both victims and perpetrators of trafficking to South Africa. As male refugees encounter unemployment and xenophobia in South Africa, some choose to recruit female relatives from their countries of origin to South Africa. These women are usually 25 years and older, married and have children. Individual refugee traffickers are assisted by ethnically-based refugee syndicates in delivering a recruiting letter to the victim in her country of origin, escorting her to South Africa, and sexually assaulting her as an initiation to sex work should she resist upon arrival. The refugee trafficker takes the earnings the woman receives as a sex worker and, to protect his investment, he assists her in applying for refugee status to prevent deportation if police detain her.
- In Lesotho, children from rural areas gravitate to Maseru to escape domestic violence, and the effects of HIV/AIDS. As street children, they are coerced or forcibly abducted by white, Afrikaans-speaking men. They are then taken across the border with the consent of border officials to border towns and asparagus farms in the Eastern Free State. They are held captive in private houses where they are sexually and sadistically assaulted over several days by small groups of men. These children are finally returned to the border, or deposited on the streets of towns in the Eastern Free State to find their own way home. Street children in Maseru are also trafficked by long-distance truck drivers, who treat them as sex slaves on their routes. These children travel as far as Cape Town, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

- Mozambican victims include both girls and young women, and range in age between 14 and 24. They are offered jobs as waitresses or sex workers in Johannesburg, and pay their traffickers ZAR 500 to smuggle them across the border in minibus taxis either at Komatipoort, or Ponta do Ouro. They stay in transit houses along South Africa's border with Mozambique and Swaziland for one night where they will be sexually assaulted as an initiation for the sex work that awaits them. Once in Johannesburg, some are sold to brothels in the central business district (CBD) for ZAR 1000. Others are sold as slaves on private order for ZAR 550, or shopped around to mineworkers on the West Rand as 'wives' for ZAR 650. An estimated 1000 Mozambican victims are recruited, transported, and exploited in this way every year, earning traffickers approximately ZAR 1 million annually.
- Malawi is characterized by three different trafficking flows. *Firstly*, Malawian businesswomen recruit young women to pursue employment or educational opportunities in Europe. Sometimes payment is made to the woman's parents. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, the woman is sold to a Nigerian madam for US\$10 000, and told that she must work as a sex-worker to pay off a debt of US\$40 000. The Nigerian madam will ask for her underwear, hair, and nail clippings in a ritual that threatens death by magic if the woman does not cooperate. The woman is then sold to another Nigerian agent from Belgium, Germany, or Italy, or rented to local brothels. One brothel in the Netherlands brands with an identifying mark the sex slaves who work there. If the woman does not perform sexually to the satisfaction of the brothel owner, she is beaten, and given sex lessons, or resold. *Secondly*, both girls and boys may be recruited in the holiday resorts along Lake Malawi by European sex tourists, who pay money to the children's parents with promises of educational opportunities in Europe. These children may be featured in pornographic videos that are transmitted over the Internet with the children's names and contact details included. In Europe, the children may be sexually exploited in private homes, or sold to pedophile rings. *Thirdly*, women and girl children are recruited along major transportation routes in Malawi by long distance truckers who promise marriage, jobs, or educational opportunities in South Africa. Once in Johannesburg, a girl or young woman is held as the trafficker's sex slave in a flat in the CBD, and he will bring clients to the flat that will pay him to have sex with the victim. Malawian businesswomen also traffic overland women and girl children to brothels in Johannesburg.
- Recruited by Thai agents in Thailand, victims may be unwitting young women from rural Thailand, or ageing female sex workers from Bangkok. The former are promised restaurant jobs in South Africa, while the latter are told of the money to be earned in sex work. They travel by air, either directly from Bangkok, or through Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore to Johannesburg International Airport (JIA), where they are met by a Thai or South African agent who sells them to brothels throughout the country. Victims from Thailand are told that they must earn US\$7500 for their freedom, and they are confined and forced to work 12 – 16 hours a day, even when ill, until the debt is repaid. South African clients may marry victims by buying their contracts, although some are forced to continue doing sex work after the marriage to earn profits for their husbands.
- Triad-linked Chinese or Taiwanese agents recruit Chinese women by promising work in Chinese-owned businesses in South Africa, or the prospect of studying in English language schools. Women may even pay to have themselves smuggled out of China. When recruited to work in Chinese-owned restaurants, clubs, or on fishing vessels in South Africa, they are forced into sex work indefinitely. If they come to South Africa to study English, they are often allowed to complete their courses before being told that they have a US\$12 500 debt that they must repay with sex work. In either case, these Chinese women have no freedom

of movement, and their traffickers take their earnings. In addition to being a destination country for Chinese trafficking victims, South Africa is also a transit country for others who are transported onwards to Europe or the United States.

- Russian and Bulgarian mafias traffic Russian and other Eastern European women on South African visas fraudulently obtained in Moscow to upscale South African brothels. These Eastern European women are promised jobs as waitresses, dancers, strippers, and hostesses in South Africa, but are not told that they must pay a debt of US\$2000 per month for six months or more as sex workers until they arrive in South Africa. If they refuse to cooperate, they and their families at home are threatened with violence.

Despite the immense profit trafficking for sexual exploitation generates for criminal syndicates, and the lawlessness and social and political disarray to which they contribute, this contemporary slave trade in women and children has yet to be addressed adequately in Southern Africa. To curtail trafficking in persons in the region requires that the different states involved cooperate to criminalize the trade, share information, protect victims, prosecute traffickers, and raise public awareness in source, transit, and destination countries. Just as organized crime exploits the opportunities and openness of globalization to extend this modern slave trade, so must States, intergovernmental agencies, and civil society exploit that same advantage to turn moral condemnation into collective action.

Pretoria, May 2003

9. CONCLUSION

There is an immense diversity of trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation in Southern Africa. Victims are African, Asian, and European, from urban and rural backgrounds, some with substantial levels of education and others with little. They are predominantly female, although where children are targeted specifically, boys are among those recruited. They include Basotho children as young as 12 and refugee woman as old as 44. Their traffickers are as varied, both women and men, with some engaged in a once-off effort to exploit commercially a female relative as a means of survival, and others conducting small, but regular, land border trafficking as part of larger operations to smuggle undocumented migrants into South Africa. Still others are linked to the multi-million dollar trade in women and children that touches Southern Africa as an afterthought, or see it as a useful transit point to final destinations in Europe and North America.

Nine distinct operations have been identified in Southern Africa:

1. Trafficking of women from refugee-producing countries to South Africa;
2. Trafficking of children from Lesotho to towns in the Eastern Free State of South Africa;
3. Trafficking of women and girls from Mozambique to Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal;
4. Trafficking of women from Malawi to Northern Europe;
5. Trafficking of girl and boy children from Malawi to Northern Europe;
6. Trafficking of women and girls from Malawi to South Africa overland;
7. Trafficking of women from Thailand to South Africa;
8. Trafficking of women from China to South Africa;
9. Trafficking of Eastern European women to South Africa.

Although there is considerable variation both in the profiles of trafficked women and children, and the profiles of their traffickers, the tactics used to recruit, transport, and exploit victims remains similar. In most cases, women and children are lured with promises of employment or educational opportunities abroad; offers made appealing and credible within the context of historical migration patterns in the region which flow southwards to the relative prosperity of South Africa, or northwards to Europe. Only sometimes are their situations absolutely desperate. More often, the transnational communication and transportation networks that are the hallmarks of globalization have allowed them an awareness of opportunities that exist elsewhere, and cross-border migration, whether documented or not, is seen as a viable means of reaching for them. Their sexual exploitation is facilitated largely by their relocation from a place with which they are familiar to one with which they are not, and is no less a violation of basic human rights than the exploitation experienced by Saartjie Baartman in Europe in 1810. They are slaves, treated and traded as chattel in the 21st century.

Despite the immense profit that trafficking for sexual exploitation generates for criminal syndicates, and the lawlessness and social and political disarray to which they contribute, this contemporary slave trade in women and children has yet to be adequately addressed in the SADC region. To curtail trafficking in persons requires that states cooperate to criminalize the trade, share information, protect victims, prosecute traffickers, and raise public awareness in source, transit, and destination countries. In Southern Africa, trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation is not perpetrated by any one group, nor are its victims from any single country or territory. It is a cross-border trade that succeeds because vulnerable women and children may be found anywhere and everywhere, and because of the expedient cooperation of recruiters, transporters, and exploiters, all of who are traffickers.* Just as organized crime exploits the opportunities and openness of globalization to extend this modern slave trade, so must States, intergovernmental agencies, and civil society exploit that same advantage to turn moral condemnation into collective action.

* UN Trafficking Protocol, article 3(a): "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons....

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FINDINGS

General Findings

1. Trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation is a significant problem in Southern Africa.
2. Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia are source countries for trafficking activities in Southern Africa. Thailand, China, and Eastern Europe are the extra-regional sources for victims trafficked to South Africa.
3. Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are transit countries for trafficking activities.
4. South Africa is the destination country for regional and extra-regional trafficking activities.
5. Trafficking victims from the region are recruited by deception, coercion, and force. Extra-regional victims are recruited by deception.
6. Victims from the region are transported primarily overland, while extra-regional victims are transported by air.
7. The exploitation suffered by African victims in South Africa ranges from exploitation for the personal sexual gratification of the trafficker, sexual exploitation for the financial benefit of the trafficker, and forced 'marriage' for sexual and labour exploitation.
8. The exploitation suffered by extra-regional victims is primarily for the financial benefit of the trafficker, and occurs at brothels throughout South Africa.
9. When identified by police in South Africa, victims of trafficking are deported as illegal immigrants without being questioned about their experiences.
10. Victims are afraid of law enforcement, and do not trust police to assist them.
11. South Africa has no public services specifically designed to assist victims of trafficking.
12. The absence of specific legislation criminalizing trafficking in persons in Southern Africa is a main obstacle preventing police and prosecutors from investigating the practice, and charging the perpetrators.

Refugee Trafficking to South Africa

13. The trafficker recruits as a survival mechanism: "vulnerable prey on the more vulnerable".
14. The trafficker is a close family relation or best friend of the victim.
15. Traffickers have refugee status in South Africa, and have been in South Africa for more than one year.
16. Victims come primarily from refugee-producing countries in Africa.
17. South Africa-based refugee clan members will deliver a recruitment letter, and escort the victim to South Africa.
18. Victims travel undocumented, with no single route, as part of general migration flows.
19. The victim sells all she has to pay for transport, expecting to remit money to her family at home following her arrival in South Africa.
20. The clan is an ethnically-based criminal syndicate involved in recruitment, transportation and exploitation/captivity.
21. Exploitation occurs in private accommodation or on the street.
22. Each trafficker exploits one trafficked woman, and she is almost always a family relation.
23. Victims are married women between the ages of 25 and 44, with children.
24. Victims are required to earn ZAR 250+ each night [approximately US\$31], all of which is taken by their traffickers.

Child Trafficking from Lesotho

25. Victims are male and female street children from Maseru.

26. Traffickers are white, Afrikaans-speaking men; and long-distance truck drivers.
27. Half of all victims are forcibly abducted in Maseru, while the other half are recruited with job offers.
28. Physical and sexual abuse at home, or the death of a parent from AIDS, forces children from rural areas and border towns to Maseru.
29. Victims trafficked by long-distance truck drivers are taken as far as Cape Town, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.
30. Victims recruited by white men are taken individually, and also in groups of two to four.
31. Victims recruited by white men are transported between 20 and 150 kms from Maseru in private vehicles. Corruption of officials at border post facilitates the trafficking process.
32. Victims recruited by white men are taken to private homes in the small towns of the Eastern Free State, asparagus farms in the border region, and Bloemfontein.
33. Victims are locked up in private houses for 3 to 7 days, and suffer sadistic sexual, physical, and verbal abuse, and food deprivation.
34. All sexual assaults are perpetrated by groups of two to four white men in a “ritual male bonding” and “as a feeding frenzy for fantasies of hatred, humiliation, and revenge”.
35. Abuse of victims is not about sex or money, but power and control, and the “need to humiliate, punish and exploit”.
36. Victims dumped on the streets of border towns of the Eastern Free State, and make their way back to Maseru on their own.

The Road from Maputo

37. Victims come from rural and urban backgrounds, from Maputo and Nampula provinces.
38. Victims are of three types: (i) sex worker victims in Maputo who are offered sex work in Johannesburg; (ii) victims who are not sex workers who are offered restaurant jobs; and (iii) victims recruited at taxi ranks in Maputo wishing to be transported to Johannesburg.
39. Victims are recruited by Mozambican women, working in partnership with Mozambican and South African men responsible for transportation of victims and exploitation.
40. Victims are transported by mini-bus taxi from Maputo to Komatipoort to Johannesburg, Maputo to Ponta do Ouro to Johannesburg, or Maputo to Ponta do Ouro to Durban.
41. Mini-bus taxis transport victims together with other undocumented migrants.
42. For victims taken by way of Komatipoort, they will spend one night in transit houses in Mpumalanga near the Mozambican and/or Swaziland border where their documents and personal possessions are taken, and they are sexually assaulted to initiate and intimidate them into sex work.
43. Transit houses are well known to the local population and police.
44. Victims taken through Ponta do Ouro border crossing are taken directly to Johannesburg or Durban, and do not spend a night in a transit house.
45. Upon arrival in Johannesburg, victims who were expecting restaurant jobs are taken to transit houses in Soweto and Lenasia before being sold.
46. Sex worker victims are sold to brothels in Johannesburg CBD for ZAR 1000 [approximately US\$125].
47. Victims who were promised restaurant jobs are sold on private order in Johannesburg for ZAR 550 [approximately US\$68], or sold as ‘wives’ to mineworkers on the West Rand for ZAR 650 [approximately US\$80, and for ZAR 950 [approximately US\$119] outside Gauteng.
48. IOM estimates that at least 1000 Mozambican victims are recruited, transported, and exploited in this way every year, earning traffickers approximately ZAR 1 million annually [approximately US\$125 000].
49. The same recruitment, transportation, and exploitation methods are used to bring victims from Botswana, and Zimbabwe through Botswana, to South Africa.

Malawi as a Source Country

50. Trafficking in Malawi is characterized by three distinct trafficking flows: (i) victims trafficked to Europe; (ii) land border trafficking to South Africa; and (iii) victims trafficked by sex tourists.

Victims Trafficked to Europe

51. Traffickers are Malawian businesswomen with links to Nigerian criminal syndicates in Europe. Other Malawian women are married to Nigerian nationals living in Malawi.
52. Victims are Malawian and Zambian, and are between 15 and 26 years old.
53. Victims are recruited from Lilongwe with offers of jobs in fashion, sales, fruit factories, hotels, and restaurants in Europe.
54. Victims stay with their traffickers for one to seven weeks in houses in Lilongwe prior to departure.
55. The trafficker pays every expense, and victims travel on passports that have been fraudulently obtained for them by the trafficker.
56. Victims leave in groups of three or four, and travel from Lilongwe or Blantyre to Amsterdam, by way of Johannesburg, Frankfurt, London, and/or Brussels. From Amsterdam, victims are taken to cities and towns by train, and are sold to Nigerians for US\$10 000 per victim.
57. Victims are told that they must do sex work to repay a debt of US\$40 000 each.
58. Within a week of arrival, the Nigerian trafficker conducts a ritual to convince victims that she can kill them with magic.
59. Nigerian madam sells victims to Nigerian agents from Germany, Belgium, and Italy, or rents them to local brothels. Nigerian madam is obliged to take a particular victim back if she is uncooperative.
60. Victims endure abusive conditions of sexual slavery, and must do anything the client demands. If they are uncooperative, they are beaten by the Nigerian trafficker.
61. One brothel in the Netherlands brands trafficking victims just below the left collarbone with an identifying mark.
62. If victims do not perform sexually to the satisfaction of the brothel owner or clients, they are given sex lessons.
63. Victims can be resold after they have paid off the US\$40 000.

Victims Trafficked by Sex Tourists

64. Victims are boys and girls all under the age of 18 years.
65. Victims live in tourist spots in districts of Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Salima, Monkey Bay, and Mangochi.
66. Victims are recruited with gifts and money by male and female sex tourists from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and are lured into sexual relationships with them while in Malawi.
67. Victims feature in pornographic videos that are distributed over the Internet. The names and contact details of the victims are included.
68. The sex tourist trafficker gives the child's parents expensive gifts, including money, and offer employment and educational opportunities for the victim in Europe.
69. In Europe, victims are kept as personal sex slaves by the trafficker or distributed to pedophile rings.

Land Border Trafficking to South Africa

70. Traffickers are long-distance truck drivers, and Malawian businesswomen.
71. Victims live in border towns and along transportation routes.
72. Victims are between 14 and 24 years old.
73. Victims are recruited with offers of marriage, study, or employment in South Africa.

74. They cross borders without documentation, and enter South Africa through Beitbridge or Komatipoort.
75. The trucker-trafficker takes his victim to a flat in Johannesburg's CBD, where she is kept as his personal sex slave, or he rents them out for sex to his friends.
76. Malawian businesswomen sell victims to Johannesburg brothels.
77. Trucker-traffickers gang rape or murder victims who resist.
78. Of the 80 people deported from South Africa to Malawi every month, at least two are trafficking victims.

Trafficking in Women from Thailand

79. Approximately seventy per cent of victims trafficked from Thailand are 25 to 35 year old sex workers who have limited earning power in Bangkok, and are recruited with offers of greater earnings in South Africa. The remaining thirty per cent of victims are non-sex workers, and are recruited with offers of jobs as waitresses, cleaners, and *au pairs* in South Africa.
80. The trafficker makes all arrangements for victims' travel.
81. Victims travel from Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore to enter South Africa at Johannesburg International Airport on a visa-free regime.
82. Once in South Africa, victims become the responsibility of Thai *mama-sans* or male agents, and are told that they are expected to pay ZAR 60 000 debt within 6 months [approximately US\$7500].
83. Victims are forced to work 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week. They have no freedom of movement, and all earnings are taken as debt-repayment, and are divided among Thai agents, Thai *mama-sans*, and South African brothel owners.
84. Victims are circulated among brothels throughout South Africa.
85. South African clients marry victims from Thailand by purchasing their contracts, and may force them to continue doing sex work so they can keep the profits.
86. Traffickers bribe immigration officials to extend the legal stay of victims in South Africa.
87. IOM estimates that between 800 and 1100 victims recruited from Thailand are trafficked into South Africa every year.

Trafficking in Chinese Women

88. Victims may be recruited actively by Chinese or Taiwanese agents with links to Triad groups for work in Chinese-owned businesses, or to study in English language schools, or they may have paid to have themselves smuggled out of China.
89. Victims come from southern China, and enter South Africa through Johannesburg International Airport, or over the land borders from Lesotho or Mozambique. They arrive with tourist visas, study permits, or false Japanese passports.
90. Victims recruited to work in restaurants, clubs, and on ships with exclusive Chinese clientele are forced into sex work indefinitely.
91. Victims who come to study at English language schools are told that they must pay a debt of ZAR 75 000 – 100 000 as sex workers [approximately US\$9400 – 12 500].
92. Victims have no freedom of movement and all their earnings go directly to the restaurant or club, or in payment of the debt.
93. South Africa is a transit country for trafficked women to Europe and the United States.

Trafficking Women from Eastern Europe

94. Traffickers in Russia and Eastern Europe recruit women for Russian and Bulgarian organized crime syndicates based in South Africa.
95. Victims are Russian or other Eastern European professional women between the ages of 18 and 35.
96. Victims are lured to South Africa with job offers as waitresses, dancers, strippers, and hostesses. Few victims are aware that they will be doing sex work.

97. Victims travel from Moscow to major Western European capitals and then to Johannesburg International Airport. Occasionally, traffickers route victims through Maseru International Airport, before transporting them across the border into South Africa by land.
98. South African visas are fraudulently obtained in Moscow.
99. In South Africa, victims are told of a debt burden they owe the traffickers, and that they must do sex work to pay it. If they resist, they and their families in the country of origin are threatened with violence.
100. Victims are placed in up-market brothels in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and must pay US\$2000 per month for six months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework and Policy Development

1. Sign, ratify, and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
2. National legislation on trafficking in persons should, at a minimum;
 - define precisely the crime of trafficking in accordance with international standards, and include expressly all exploitative practices covered by the international definition of trafficking such as debt bondage, forced labour, and forced prostitution;
 - ensure that definitions of trafficking reflect the need for special safeguards and care for children, including appropriate legal protection;
 - ensure that trafficked persons are not punished for any offences or activities related to them having been trafficked, such as prostitution and immigration violations;
 - ensure that victims of trafficking are protected from summary deportation, or return where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that such return would represent a significant security risk to the trafficked person or to his/her family;
 - consider temporary or permanent residency in countries of transit or destination for trafficking victims in exchange for testimony against alleged traffickers, or on humanitarian and compassionate grounds;
 - ensure that victims of trafficking are offered the possibility of obtaining compensation for damages suffered;
 - provide for proportional criminal penalties to be applied to persons found guilty of trafficking in aggravating circumstances, including offences involving trafficking in children or offences committed or involving complicity by State officials; and
 - provide for the confiscation of the instruments and proceeds of trafficking, and related offences, to be used for the benefit of trafficked persons.

Investigation, Identification, and Prosecution of Traffickers

3. Identify a national government official as the country's trafficking focal point, and establish a National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons that brings together relevant ministries, agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of civil society to develop and implement policy to combat trafficking.
4. Develop guidelines and procedures for relevant State authorities and officials involved in the detection, detention, reception and processing of irregular migrants, to permit the rapid and accurate identification of trafficked persons, and ensure that special procedures are in place for the rapid identification of trafficked children.
5. Create a specialized police unit or task force, rather than local police forces, to deal with trafficking cases, including both trafficking investigations and the protection of victims from reprisals.
6. Recognize the important contribution that victims of trafficking can, on a voluntary basis, make to investigations of trafficking and organized crime.
7. Strengthen training for law enforcement personnel, immigration and customs officials, prosecutors and judges, and other relevant officials on the prevention of trafficking, prosecuting the traffickers, and protecting the rights of victims, including child victims.

Data Collection and Information Sharing

8. Standardize the collection of statistical information and field data on trafficking, and related movements, such as irregular migration and migrant smuggling, which may include a trafficking element.

9. Ensure the disaggregation of migration data on the basis of age, gender, nationality, date and place of entry and departure, place of visa renewal, overstay, and deportation.
10. Facilitate access to victims of trafficking for intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental agencies for interview and assistance purposes.
11. Establish direct channels of communication within and between countries linking investigators, law enforcement agencies, regional and intergovernmental agencies.
12. Develop and disseminate information materials on trafficking in persons that focus on raising public awareness.

Assistance and Support to Victims

13. Together with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, develop the capacity of reception centres to receive trafficked persons by providing physical security, basic material assistance, medical care, psychological counselling, and legal assistance to victims.
14. The provision of shelter and assistance should not be made contingent on the willingness of victims to give evidence in criminal proceedings.
15. Develop special witness protection measures to secure trafficking victim witnesses against reprisals.
16. Establish a fund to provide for the voluntary return and reintegration of victims of trafficking to their countries of origin.
17. Adopt policies and programmes specifically designed to protect and support child victims of trafficking.

Regional Cooperation

18. Adopt regional and bi-lateral agreements aimed at preventing trafficking, and protecting the rights and dignity of trafficked persons.
19. Develop procedures and protocols for judicial cooperation and the conduct of joint investigations by law enforcement authorities of concerned states within the region.
20. Introduce standard procedures within the region for the voluntary return and reintegration of victims of trafficking in their countries of origin, and the extradition of traffickers for prosecution.
21. Establish and maintain regular contact with national focal points in the region on all issues pertaining to trafficking operations and victim assistance.