

Human Trafficking – The Scourge of Modern Slavery

The second largest international crime is now people trafficking. This shocking statistic has been given an all too visible human face in recent months as several local European communities have been coming to terms with the shocking reality of slavery in their very midst. The imprisonment of domestic workers and their forced labour is not limited to developing world settings. Much of this is tied to an increasingly out-of-control breakdown in social relationships. Yet, in the midst of this suffering, the Christian communities have huge potential to provide practical solutions.

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Marina Zaitsava serves as a European Policy Officer with specialisation in freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and trafficking and sexual exploitation at CARE for Europe (Christian Action Research & Education), a Brussels-based NGO (www.careforeurope.org). She is involved in monitoring, providing research briefings, raising awareness at meetings in the EU Institutions and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, as well as networking with non-governmental organisations on issues related to family policies, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, surrogacy, sexual and reproductive health and rights, promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, implementation of the equal treatment directive in employment, and bioethics. Marina holds degrees in Linguistics, Theological Studies, and International Communication and is strongly committed to promoting Christian values and ethical issues in the public arena.

I. Human Trafficking: What is it?

"Human trafficking is a lucrative "business" with large margins and apparently still too low risk for the perpetrators. Therefore, there is much to do, so that people trade is no longer profitable in the future." Sebastian Kurz, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Integration, Austria

According to the Palermo Protocol, there are three aspects of human trafficking:

1. Recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons
2. Using threats, deception, force or coercion
3. For the purposes of exploitation, including: Sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography), forced labour or services (agricultural, construction, manufacturing), domestic servitude, removal of organs forced begging, benefit fraud, petty criminality

What does human trafficking look like in Europe?

1. 3 million trafficked persons within the OSCE. (Source: OSCE)
2. 880 000 people trafficked for labour (Source: ILO)

3. 61% identified victims were from the EU, 2010-2013 (Source: European Commission). Romanian and Bulgarian victims were most common, usually Roma.
4. Trafficking for sexual exploitation dominates (nearly two-thirds).
5. The U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report recorded just 7,705 prosecutions globally in 2012.
6. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) there are 20.9 million victims of trafficking and forced labour globally. 75-80% victims are women and girls.
7. Children are increasingly trafficked for benefits fraud, forced begging and street crime. The percentage of child victims is close to 15 % in 2008-2010
8. Organized crime groups control most of the human trafficking.
9. Traffickers are mainly from the EU, Nigeria, China and Turkey.
10. Cybercrime is rapidly proliferating. Child sexual abuse is rampant on the internet via chat rooms and webcams.
11. Private employment agencies are a key recruiting arm of the trade in human beings.
12. Labour exploitation is growing. (Construction industry, agriculture, tourism, catering, nursing, domestic service and temporary, seasonal work.)

II. The Response?

“Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, oh hold them back. If you say, ‘See, we did not know this,’ does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul?” Proverbs 24:11-12

“The question is: what must we do to make human trafficking a thing of the past, once and for all? How do we finish the work that our predecessors started two hundred years ago...? The problem is complex, and our response must also be multi-faceted. The answer, or at least part of it, can be found in prevention, protection and partnership” Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

The European Freedom Network is a network of EEA, with the mission “to help the body of Christ in Europe work effectively to prevent and combat human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and to seek the restoration of its victims.” One of EFN’s 130 partners wrote *“EFN is the closest modern version of the underground railroad that I can imagine...”*

III. What can Christians do?

The evils of human trafficking are huge. The potential to do something about it are also huge.

1. Pray! Trafficking is a huge evil. Spiritual warfare is needed.
2. Work out a biblical perspective on slavery and exploitation, work and caring for the vulnerable, respect between the sexes and on sinfulness and redemption.

3. Find out about your country's human trafficking response. See your GRETA report¹
4. Find out about the NGOs and others' actions to prevent, intervene and help people find a way out of exploitation. Consider how you can get involved.
5. Join the EFN's Facebook page and participate in "Pause to Pray" each month.
6. Support people without work. Promote fair trade.
7. Do preventative work with children, young people and vulnerable families
8. Welcome unconditionally the vulnerable and those coming out of exploitation.
9. Help people (including Christians) overcome their desire to view pornography.
10. Engage in advocacy.

IV. Advocacy

Good Practice. An obvious target for advocacy is encouraging the spread of best practice.

1. Serbia: 75 health mediators have been trained in the prevention of trafficking of women and children in the Roma community.
2. In Albania the "National Programme for Zero School Drop-out" fosters access to education for children belonging to vulnerable groups.
3. In Moldova, the National Employment Agency offers counselling and training and gives an allowance for vocational integration or reintegration.
4. In Turkmenistan Austrian experts provided interrogation training for judges and prosecutors focusing on dealing with victims of human trafficking.
5. In Moldova, regional multidisciplinary teams (social services, medical establishments, police and NGOs) all work side-by-side to identify trafficking victims.
6. For 15 years, the Austrian police have worked with LEFÖ , where women receive emergency housing, psychosocial support and medical care.

Good Laws, Regulation and Practice. Campaign to help your country improve.

1. Prostitution law. The Nordic Model? Raising the age that prostitution is legal?
2. The full, compassionate implementation of the EU Directive on Human Trafficking.
3. Equipping everyone to know how to spot human trafficking and what to do: border guards, transport workers, hospitality industry workers, the police, medical professionals and social workers, farmers, employers, everybody.
4. Your campaign. Stopping adverts for sexual services? Slave free chocolate? 18 October?

¹ The Council of Europe's GRETA mechanism reports on all Member States. See reading list for website.

Suggested Readings:

Warning. Resources on human trafficking & prostitution can be shocking.

European Freedom Network <http://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/europeanfreedomnetwork>

European Commission – “Together against trafficking in human beings” <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/index.action?breadCrumbReset=true>

Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking home page, with links to GRETA country reports.
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/default_en.asp

IOM - <https://www.iom.int/cms/countertrafficking> OSCE - <http://www.osce.org/cthb>

EUROPOL

https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/trafficking_in_human_beings_in_the_european_union_2011.pdf

“The Good News about Injustice”, by Gary Haugen, IVP 2009

“Escaping the Devil’s Bedroom”, by Dawn Jewell Herzog, Monarch 2008

“Not For Sale”, by David Batstone HarperOne 2010

“God in a brothel”, by Daniel Walker, IVP 2011.

“Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy”, by Kevin Bales. Berkley: University of California Press, third edition, 2012.

NCAP Good Practice Guide. <http://www.beyondthestreets.org.uk/>

Hands that Heal <http://www.comission.org/resources/?id=1260>