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### Shrouded Sins: An Exploration of Child Sex Trafficking in South Africa

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Jennifer Kennedy  
Dr. Nickerson, Dr. Habib  
PEL450  
December 9, 2009

### Our Shrouded Sins: An Exploration of Child Sex Trafficking in South Africa

As you read this, 27 million people all over the world are slaves (Not For Sale Campaign). Currently an estimated two million of these slaves are children, who have been forced into involuntary servitude and trapped in the global commercial sex trade (World Vision Inc.). The U.S. State Department's annual report on *Trafficking in Persons* has estimated that during the year 2004 a flow of between 600,000 and 800,000 human slaves were trafficked across world borders (UNICEF). UNIFEM estimates that between 500,000 and 2 million people have been trafficked each year as forced laborers, slaves, or servants (UNIFEM). USAID estimates that nearly four million people are trafficked each year (UNESCO). Although shocking, these statistics are inconclusive, especially since many are conservative estimates and are not based on reputable data collections. No one really knows how many slaves exist in the world today. Statistical estimates range from thousands to millions and yet more researchers of this topic agree that many slaves have yet to be identified. But no matter the actual numbers, the figures speak for themselves; slavery exists, persists, and includes a great multitude of people. We as citizens of the world are not as enlightened as we think ourselves to be in this, the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many of us in the United States believe that we had already prevailed over slavery hundreds of years ago; we also believe we have moved onto solving more "pressing" issues, but this is not the case. As of December 9, 2009, we continue to live in a world where slavers have robbed the innocence from children, seized the dignity of millions, and have extinguished the

promising future for all. We live in a world where slavery is tolerated, even promoted, and now, you have a choice. You can continue to pretend that human life and dignity is of no consequence, or you can choose to listen, learn, and act. You can be sure that there are real people, children, living in the world as of this moment that have no rights or freedoms, but will you do something to mitigate the problem? The responsibility is yours.

Child sex trafficking affects hundreds of thousands of people, especially in the Republic of South Africa, and is considered to be a modern form of slavery. Many believe that the United States eliminated the right to create slaves in the 1860's, but this is not the case in other countries around the world, especially third world nations. The creation of slaves persists. It occurs every day in many countries even developed nations such as the United States. Those countries that have been identified as ones that openly tolerate human slave trafficking are: Thailand, England, India, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico, and Kenya. The country of South Africa can be included in this group and also serves as an origin, country of transport, and destination for child sex trafficking. Although such a pervasive and life-altering issue, this crisis is vastly underpublicized in comparison to the AIDS pandemic that currently afflicts Sub-Saharan Africa. This crisis has drawn the majority of the world's media attention. A vast reservoir of both factual and moral evidence exists to prove that slavery is a weighty issue. Countless testimonies reported from victims of the sex trafficking business attest to the existence of a well-planned and all-encompassing network of sex traffickers. In the country of South Africa alone, thousands of children are somehow connected in some way to the business of sexual gratification. Morally, this practice robs young children of their freedom, developmentally it robs them of their innocence, and removes them from their family during a crucial time in their moral, social, and psychological development. It also diminishes their self-worth and efficacy as a human being.

The goal of this paper is to raise public awareness about this critical issue by summarizing what is currently known about the heinous practice of child sex trafficking in the country of South Africa. It will explore the six main components of the sex trafficking trade that involves children: 1.) The Causes, 2.) The Networks, 3.) The Conditions, 4.) Victim's Testimonies, 5.) The Solutions, and 6.) Spreading Awareness. For the sake of our own humanity, we cannot allow the world's youth to continue to be used as the victims of sex crimes. We have a duty and a history, as Americans, of protecting the rights and freedoms of others around the world, especially those who have not been given a voice. Children are the most vulnerable and helpless victims of slavery and they need the help of strong adult advocates to protect them and to create a safer world in which they can grow up. Therefore, we need to spread information and educate people about the enslavement of children in order to combat this serious and growing issue and protect all youth from these evils. As stated by Inspector General Joseph E. Schmitz, Department of Defense, "For those of us who are in position to do something to combat human slavery, however small our contribution, neutrality is a sin" (IAST).

### **1. The Cause: What is Child Sex Trafficking?**

This section of this paper explores the structure of the child sex trafficking trade and presents an overview of current practices. It also provides information about the causes of this growing crime. Finally, it discusses how the issues related to sex trafficking are directly connected to specific outcomes of the AIDS pandemic, especially on the continent of Africa.

#### Overview

Child sex trafficking is a term used to describe “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation...” (UNICEF). This exploitation has been proven to exist in nearly all of the countries in today’s modern world, from the most developed, to the most impoverished nations. Sex trafficking businesses can be as unique as the individuals who create them. They can exist as international, regional, inter-regional, and domestic networks, but they all facilitate the capture and the prostitution of children for profit. These networks have been created by organized crime groups, or may be linked together by a chain of middlemen who facilitate the movement of the children for monetary profit. Often, the victims themselves have been forced to go out and recruit new children through false promises of gifts and/or entitlements of education and money. Once these networks acquire the children, they transport the children to other countries by making use of the existing sexual industry trade routes used to export adult women, thus combining the child sex trafficking rings with other forms of sexual exploitation. This helps to build an even more extensive network that results in greater growth, expansion, and monetary profits.

### Causes

Child sex trafficking results from a multitude of causes, all of which contribute to perpetuating this criminal practice. First, poverty is primarily responsible for and is the number one reason why children are targeted by the sex trafficking industry. Many families live in dire poverty in South Africa, in some areas making the equivalent of 350 US dollars a year. This extreme poverty weakens family ties and traditional values as people take increasingly desperate steps in order to survive (Pannell). This leads many families to sell their own children into this

network for as little as £10. Oftentimes, traffickers coerce families into selling their children, making them believe that their children will receive a good education and/or professional training from a wealthy family. With the hope of a better life for their child in mind, parents release their children into the cruel reality of life as a slave within the network. In other instances, traffickers kidnap children off the streets after war, poverty, or disease force these children from their homes and onto the streets; the traffickers then force them into prostitution (Monekosso). The children's families never see their sons and daughters ever again. Oftentimes, child victims of sex trafficking are forced to go and recruit new child victims, once again exploiting desperate and vulnerable children.

Another cause of child sex trafficking is the virgin sex myth. Due to a lack of AIDS awareness, many South Africans believe that AIDS is preventable if one has sex with a virgin. Children become the obvious target due to the fact that it can be presumed that they are still virgins. This puts increased pressure on sex traffickers to capture and enslave young children rather than adults. AIDS awareness could help put a stop to these types of myths that help to target innocent children for use in the sex trade. It becomes clear that a lack of education also contributes to the growth of this industry, as many believe these myths to be true and have little or no scientific knowledge about how the AIDS virus is really prevented.

Desperation also contributes to the existence of the child sex trafficking trade. Many children are deserted and left to fend for themselves after their families deteriorate due to war, death, poverty, and/or disease. These children have no place or support in their community. Once this happens, they are left to wander the streets with little to no protection. They then become obvious and easy targets for predatory sex traffickers who will take advantage of the

plight of any desperate child. This vulnerability assures that these children will voluntarily choose to join a sex trafficking network.

A lack of strong legislation also contributes to the growth of the sex trafficking industry and does little to prevent it. If traffickers are caught, they frequently stand trial before a court, which if charged, results in the payment of a small monetary fine; there aren't any heavy punishments in place to deter people from entering trafficking rings. Additionally, many governments have not acknowledged that there even is a problem, nor have they committed their resources to dealing with sex trafficking rings. For example, the government of South Africa has acknowledged child sex trafficking as a crime, but has not taken noticeable steps to help to eradicate it. In the absence of national laws, it is difficult to prosecute traffickers and it is left to independent international organizations, such as the United Nations, to combat this crime

The AIDS pandemic also contributes to the sex trafficking industry within South Africa. Currently, there are more than 5.7 million South Africans living with HIV (UNICEF) and it is likely that many more have yet to be diagnosed. As this virus spreads, it forces more and more people into poverty, a leading factor in the prevalence of sex trafficking rings on the streets of South Africa. Furthermore, as more adults die at the hands of this virus, they leave thousands more children alone and on the streets to fend for themselves. No one has the resources to care for all these children, so they remain vulnerable, just waiting to be snatched off the streets (Huda). This is a golden opportunity for sex traffickers who experience a great demand because of the needs of the sex tourism industry, brothels, and individual customers. They are able to easily prey on their targets and quickly initiate these abandoned children into the sex trafficking industry. This in turn has made the sex trafficking industry a very lucrative venture that requires very little investment funds and results in huge profits; the traffickers only have to create

methods to lure and capture these defenseless children from the streets and then develop routes to put them into the hands of pedophiles in order to make large sums of money.

Finally, a lack of awareness also contributes to this growing issue. When few are aware of the problem, it is difficult to address it. Many in the outside world are oblivious to the existence of this issue in South Africa, because of the inundation of attention the media has given to the AIDS pandemic. As previously stated, The Republic of South Africa alone is the nation with the second highest HIV prevalence in the world, with an estimate of over 5.7 million people currently living with HIV (UNICEF). These statistics display the crisis that has been caused by the AIDS pandemic, especially in South Africa. Furthermore, many corporations have taken up the call to prevent AIDS and spread awareness. Corporations such as Gap, Hallmark, Starbucks, Windows, Dell, Apple, American Express, Yahoo!, and numerous others have donated money and supported AIDS awareness facilities in South Africa. They also use it as a marketing tool and promote (Product) RED products, where proceeds go to prevention, research, and medicine (The Persuaders LLC.). These companies help to advertise the cause and to spread awareness to the public. As a result, the AIDS campaign infiltrates the media daily and has brought this issue to the public's attention.

Sex trafficking does not receive the same type of media attention as does AIDS. But it should. Human trafficking is a global \$32 billion industry and is second in profits only to that of illegal drug cartels and the selling of illegal weapons. (Tiefenbrun). Although organizations such as the UN work to prevent trafficking, major corporations are not using child sex trafficking issues to promote their products and or to raise funds. By nature, sex trafficking occurs insidiously and is not as visibly detrimental to South African society as is the AIDS virus. Powerful people have made a great deal of money as a result of being paid to look the other way



and/or to downgrade the existence of the trade as a problem. Sex trafficking also seems to affect less people than AIDS; there are few accurate or reliable surveys on which to base conclusions and so this causes reduced media attention. As a result, a lack of awareness exists, leaving many unaware of the growing torment these children face each and every day. This also helps to protect the child sex trafficking trade. First and foremost information must be collected in order to identify the scope and the depth of this problem and then the world needs to be made aware of how to identify and combat this profitable industry.



Figure 1 Countries reported as country of origin in Africa



Figure 2 Countries reported as countries of transit

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations  
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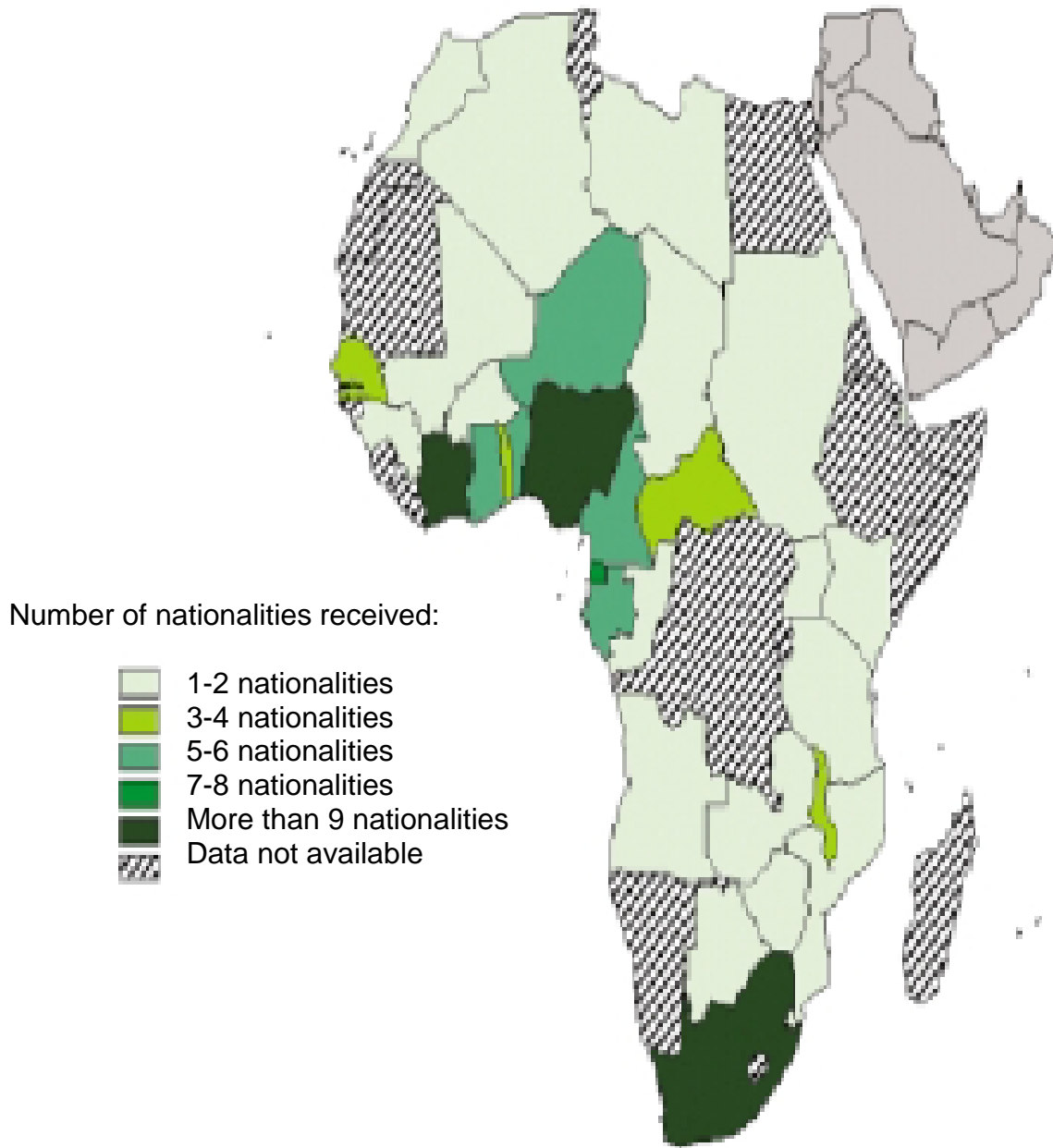


Figure 3 Countries of destination according to number of reported countries of origin

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations  
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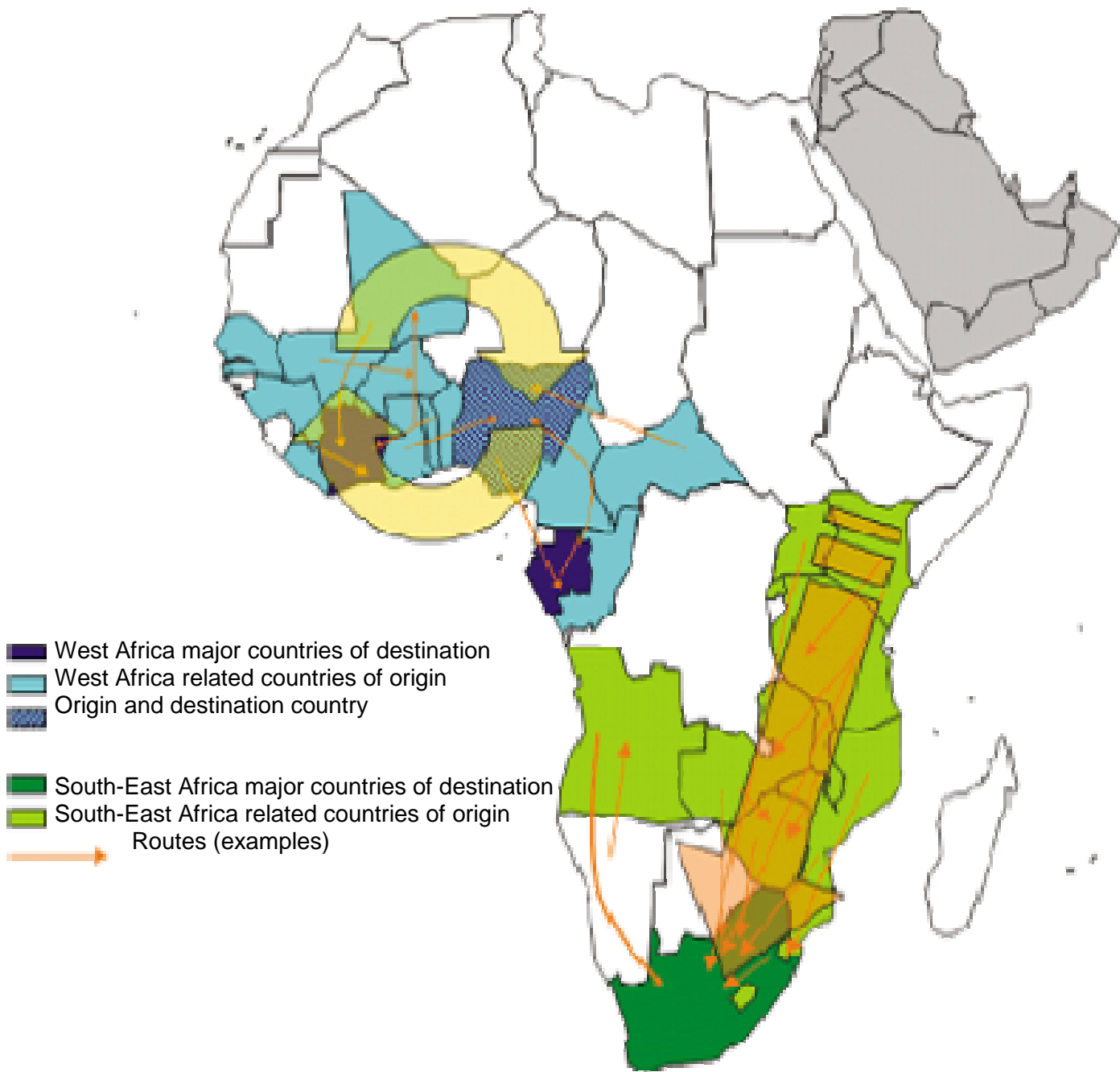


Figure 4 Major countries of destination and related countries of origin

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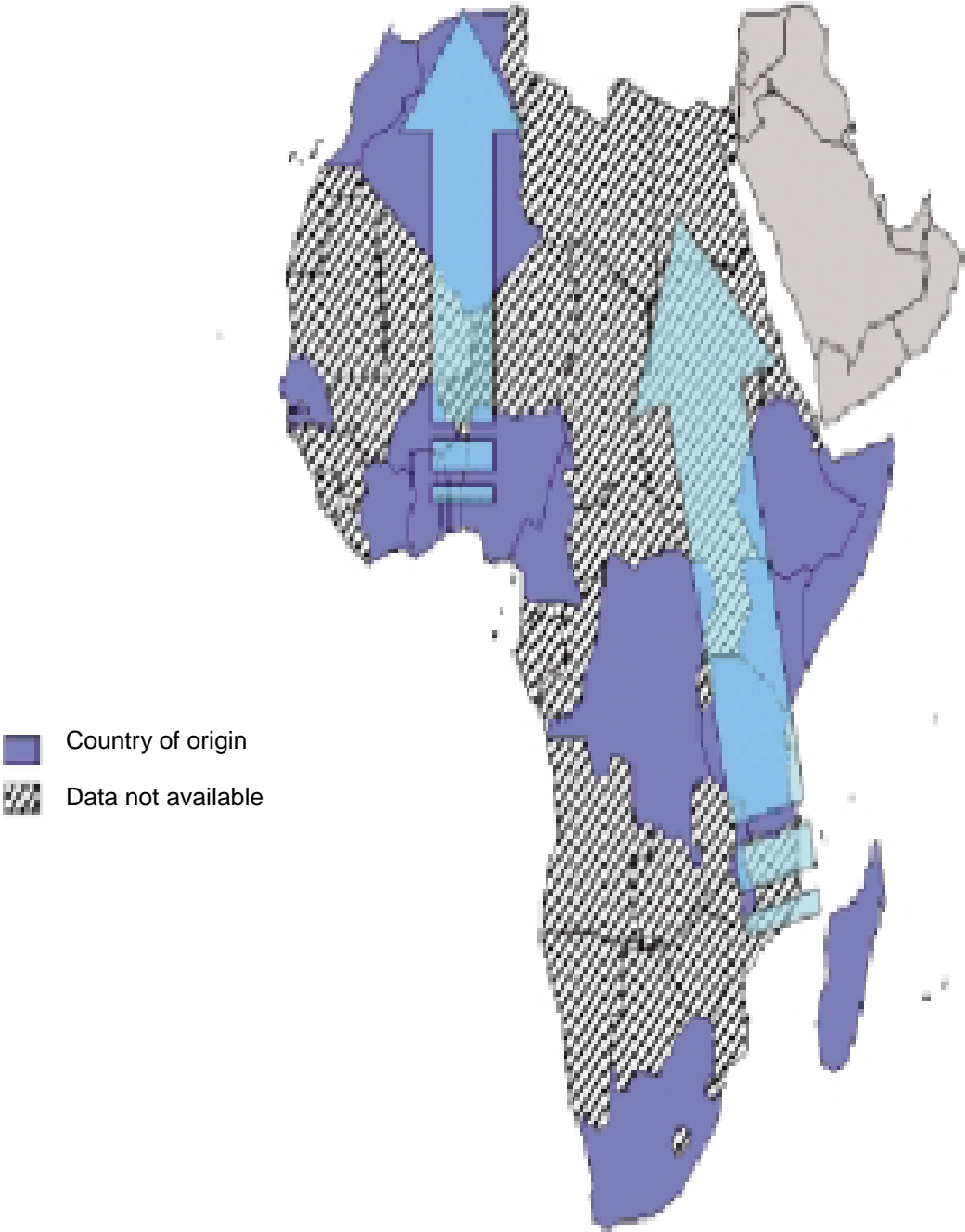


Figure 5 Countries of origin for victims trafficked to Europe

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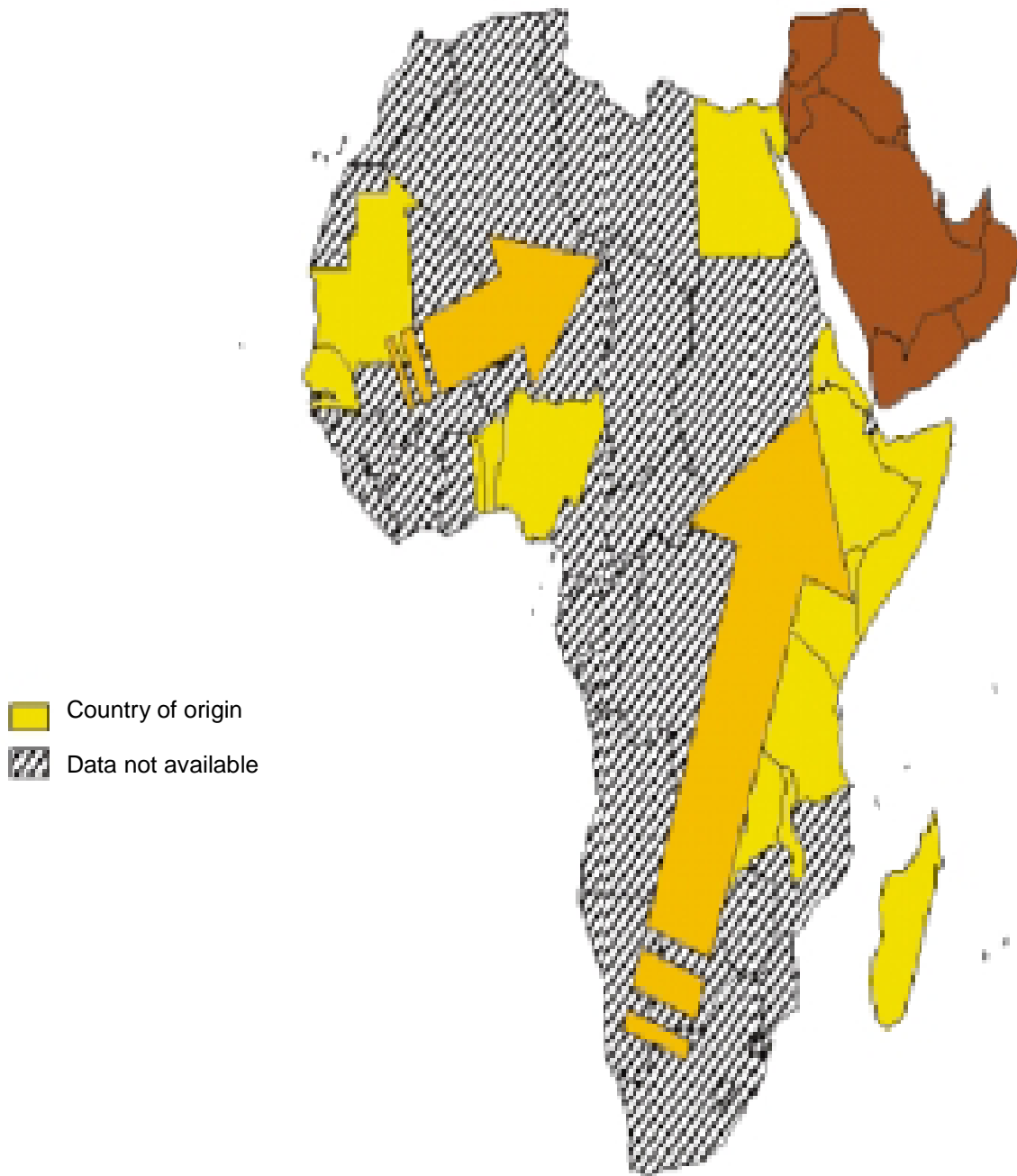


Figure 6 Countries of origin for victims trafficked to the Middle East

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations  
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1997 estimates

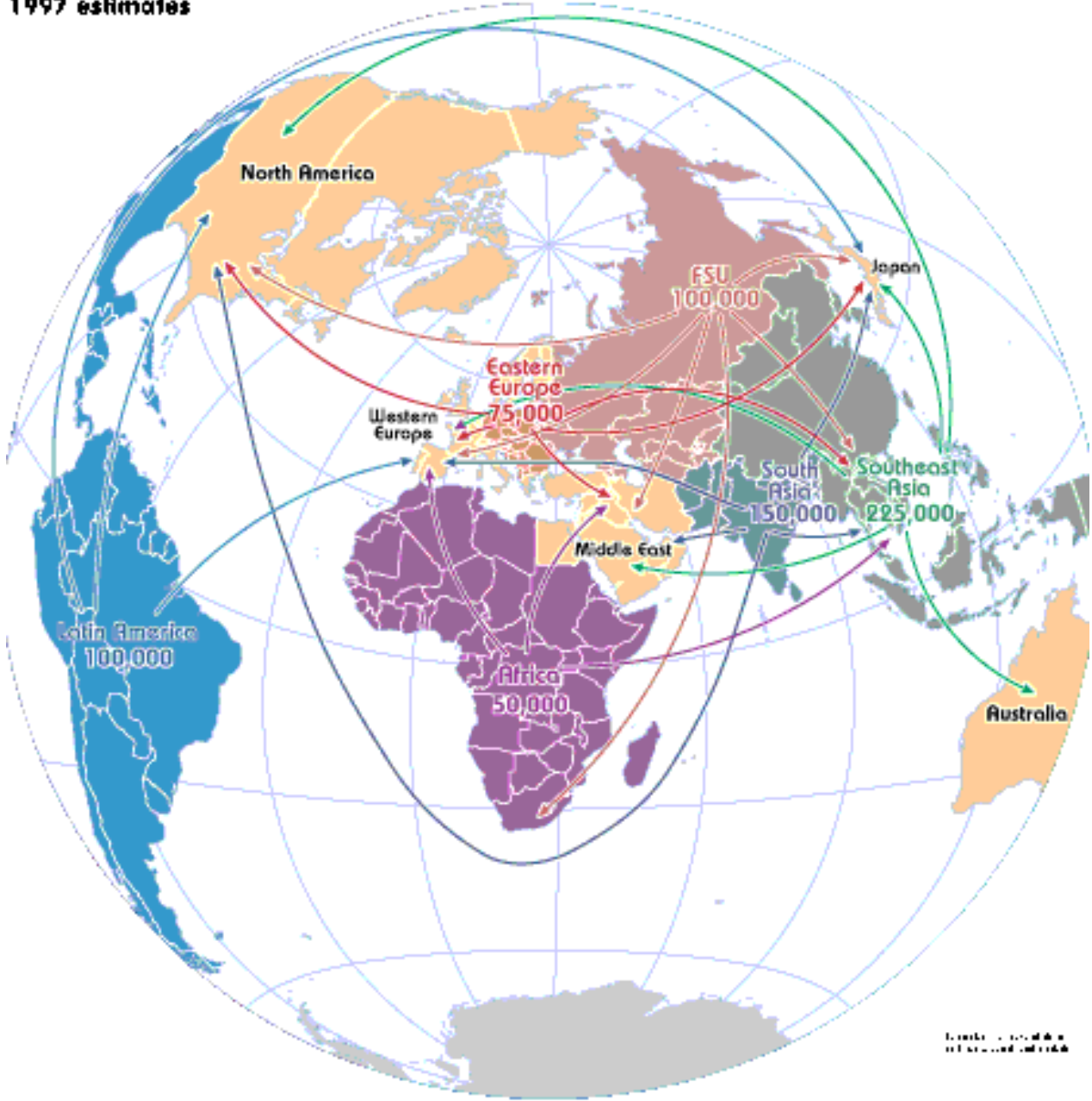


Figure 7 Global Trafficking in Women and Children



## 2. The Networks

This section of this paper aims to explore the global networks that facilitate the transport of children. Furthermore, it explores the phenomenon of sex tourism which links a myriad of countries to the ever-changing sex trafficking networks.

Sex trafficking is a \$32 billion industry that knows no boundaries. This evil business infiltrates almost every country around the globe, regardless of the country's willingness to participate. It is the trafficking network that connects these countries in this sinister enterprise and facilitates the transport of millions of children annually. The network consists of various routes, which often dovetail along with established drug and adult trafficking routes; unfortunately this allows for greater ease of transport. These routes are nearly impossible to track and record since they are well concealed and constantly change. However, there are certain criteria that affect the creation of sex trafficking routes which help us to identify the more prevalent trafficking patterns. The factor that has the largest impact is geography. Traffickers transport children along the quickest and safest routes. They also tend to avoid physical barriers such as mountains, deserts, and forests. Secondly, the access to a range of transportation modes such as cars, trains, and planes, and the ability to communicate instantly and anonymously helps determine the selection of particular routes. Traffickers make use of the easiest mode of transportation at hand that best avoids checkpoints and border searches. Avoiding any checkpoints is a major consideration when creating a route. Therefore, countries with weak or corrupt border patrols, and law enforcement and/or corrupt officials who can ensure successful border checks see more sex trafficking business across their borders. Finally, other organized crime groups such as black market dealers and drug lords will also facilitate the transportation of

children for a price. When criminal groups gain control of all entry and exit points through one end of a country to another, this then is referred to as a trafficking highway (UNICEF).

It has been proven that the country of South Africa currently serves as an area of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking (“South Africa; Country Linked to Global Human Trafficking”) especially because of its geographical location. The country is easily reached by boat, and is easily connected to the trade routes that already exist in Eastern Africa. South Africa is predominantly considered to be a destination for trafficked children, but also serves as an origin and transport country. Many children arrive in South Africa from Thailand, Eastern Europe, China, and nearby African countries. If children remain in South Africa after they are captured, or if they arrive in South Africa from a foreign country, they are usually transported to major urban centers such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Bloemfontein. Here, they fall victim to prostitution and sex tourism, two of the major industries that have been identified in these large cities (U.S. Department of State). If taken out of South Africa, these children are usually sent to wealthier countries in Western Europe such as Belgium, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany. They are also sent to countries in North America such as the United States; or Eastern Europe and to Asia such as Thailand (“South Africa; Country Linked to Global Human Trafficking”); and the Middle East (“Quick Guide: UK Human Trafficking”). These countries have exhibited a demand, a source of wealth, and an ease of transport which have facilitated the deliberate movement of enslaved children to these particular countries.

In 2003, it was estimated that 38,000 children were part of this growing network in South Africa which was .084% of the population at the time (“South Africa; Country Linked to Global Human Trafficking”). This figure was part of an estimated 1.2 million children who are trafficked globally every year (UNICEF). In South Africa, approximately half of these children

are between the ages of 10 and 14, while the other half are between ages 15 and 18 (International Labour Office). One main reason that children are trafficked to South Africa instead of other countries is the large sex tourism industry that exists in this nation. Sex tourism constitutes any trip with the purpose of a commercial sexual relationship between the tourist and a resident at the destination. Thailand is usually identified as the country credited with one of the strongest sex tourism trades, yet this industry has become increasingly prevalent in Southern Africa, and has been the cause of the transportation of many child sex slaves into the region (“South Africa's Child Sex Trafficking Nightmare”). Currently, there is an increased concern about the sex tourism industry in South Africa due to the FIFA World Cup which is being held in major cities across the Republic of South Africa, such as Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, in June 2010. With an expected 500,000 visitors coming to watch the World Cup games, sex tourism will be on the rise as will the crime of child sex trafficking (“Namibia; Human Trafficking and Prostitution to Surge Ahead of 2010 World Cup”). Fortunately, this world event has also brought increased attention about the issue of sex tourism by the national and international media. Many people have spoken out about the rise in sex tourism and trafficking as a result of the games, leading the media to create anti-trafficking campaigns in preparation. South Africa has already established a crime tip line, and is spreading awareness through a 16-days of activism campaign against the abuse of women and children. A more aware public could not only help deter sex trafficking during the games, but it could also demand more information about the severity and the scale of this issue.

The information we currently have about this vast network proves that child sex trafficking is a multi-national issue with connections in almost every region of the globe. Therefore, efforts must not solely lie with the industry as it exists in South Africa, but must be

combated on a much larger global scale. The first step towards a solution is to enact child sex trafficking prevention laws in those countries rated as “high occurrence” areas, but eventually every country will need to introduce preventative as well as punitive steps if the world is to see global changes in the rights and in the treatment of children.

### **3. The Condition Child Sex Slaves Face**

This section will expose the conditions that child sex slaves face once they are trafficked. This information is vastly unpublicized due to its disturbing nature and graphic descriptions. The general public does not want to bear the weight of these grave testimonies. However, these testimonies must be published and heard in order to ensure public acknowledgement of the harsh reality of far too many children.

The conditions that the children face throughout their entire trafficking experience are deplorable. Prior to being sold, many children and teenagers are forced into drug addictions so that they must engage in sex to support the costs of their addictive habits (“South Africa; Gangs Target Children for Trafficking”). Upon capture, traffickers usually repeatedly rape these children so that the traumatic reaction of engaging in sexual acts is lessened. After enduring these traumas they are then transported. Many children die during transport and never reach their destinations as the journey is dangerous (Monekosso). However, if they do reach their destination, the children are then sold to a single owner, a gang, or a brothel by the sex trafficker. Once these children are sold, they are often tattooed with their “owner’s” or “gangster’s” name, beaten, and gang-raped. They are taught and expected to steal their client’s money and to recruit other children into joining the trafficking ring. They usually do not receive any of the money they make, and are expected to pay back “debts” of up to forty or fifty thousand dollars, for the

costs of transport, food, and the bribes necessary to coerce border patrols to look the other way (South Africa's Child Sex Trafficking Nightmare). Since they have no available income, they often face harsh living conditions such as insufficient shelter, healthcare, and/or food. The children must also work long hours and may have multiple sexual partners in the span of a day. They may also be used in child pornography films.

No living being should have to endure conditions such as these, especially our world's children. These conditions and experiences cause severe trauma, which will scar these children for the rest of their lives. All suffer from various forms of Traumatic Shock Syndrome and then form Post-Traumatic Shock Syndrome. They are treated as objects for sale, rather than human beings, which leads to complete humiliation and degradation. Additionally, these children face traumatic disorders that will affect the quality of their lives for years to come. Due to the severe sexual trauma, these children can suffer from a range of problems including dissociation, depression, anxiety, insomnia, guilt, fear (especially of the opposite sex), sexual dysfunction, withdrawal, acting out, learning disabilities, and may struggle to form any type of intimate relationship in their adult lives. They may also experience developmental regression where they experience bed-wetting, eating disorders, sleep disturbances, masturbation, and a range of behavioral issues (American Psychological Association). Therefore, the suffering will not end even if the abuse ends. These children will suffer for years to come; many for their entire lives.

#### **4. Victims Testimonies**

This section of this paper exposes numerous testimonies that attest to the existence of a broad sex trafficking ring present in South Africa that involves thousands of children, and offers

some moral reflections on the issue. These testimonies prove that this in fact is a malignant and prevalent issue present in Southern Africa.

In 2003, four teenage girls were spending the afternoon in a shopping mall when they were approached by a group of men. The men threatened to shoot the girls if they did not come with them. The girls were then taken to a car in full sight of passerby's and then brought to a house in another city. At the house the girls were beaten and raped. The girls were then held as sex slaves, forced into drug addictions, and had the gang leader's name tattooed on their hands. The girls were then forced to become child prostitutes and were sold to numerous men throughout their time as captives ("South Africa; Gangs Target Children for Trafficking"). These girls were lucky because one girl eventually escaped and was able to contact her family; many other girls were not so lucky and continued to live their entire lives as sex slaves after being trafficked. The children who are not saved or do not escape continue a life of forced prostitution. Many of these children die young or contract AIDS and other diseases, leading to a slow and painful death.

Another teenage male child described his trafficking experience in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho:

"The boy met a white man in Maseru who promised to help him find his lost parents...The boy crossed the border with the man and was taken to a private house. There he was beaten and forced to smoke dagga. The men forced him to have anal sex. He was kept captive for two days, given no food and had his hands and legs bound. On the third day he was thrown out of the house. Because of an 'aching anus' and an empty stomach he was unable to move and stayed close to

the house. That night, the same man came and punched and kicked the boy who eventually lost consciousness (Martens, Pieczkowski and Van Vuuren-Smyth).”

These testimonies give a personal voice to child sex trafficking and the events that many trafficked children have experienced. These personal stories prove that child sex trafficking is real and is occurring to males and females, children and teenagers across Southern Africa and beyond in the global context. We must remember that many children never get to voice the cruelties that they have endured as they are still trapped in the sex trafficking rings, suffering injustices similar to the ones described by those who have been freed.

Obviously, the practice of child sex trafficking involves many moral implications. First, it violates many of the rights set aside for children and humans in general. It violates a myriad of articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United Nations established in 1948. All nations in Africa are members of the United Nations, and therefore should grant all of their citizens the included rights. However, when children are trafficked for the purpose of sex, they lose many of these basic human rights. For example, sex trafficking violates article 4 which states that, “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.” These children are essentially sex slaves as they are held captive and forced into performing countless sexual acts, directly violating this article. Furthermore, this practice also violates article 5, which states that, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment.” The conditions that traffickers subject these children to are certainly “inhumane” and “degrading” as they lose the basic privileges of freedom and dignity (United Nations).

Aside from violating amendments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, child sex trafficking also violates specific Rights of the Child, which is a document that UNICEF established. UNICEF also established an amendment to this document named the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. This bill, created in 2000, defines the offenses of the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography (United Nations). Child sex trafficking can violate all three aspects of this protocol, thereby violating the inherent rights set forth for any child. The violation of these basic rights serves as one example of the moral dilemmas that child sex trafficking creates. It is morally corrupt to deny any child of the basic rights set forth for him/her especially when they are so undeniable.

Aside from violating inherent rights, child sex trafficking also causes intense trauma. Many victims suffer from psychological damage after being separated from their family and oftentimes country and then being raped or forced into prostitution. This psychological damage includes depression, thoughts of suicide, self-mutilation, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The children frequently have flashbacks to incidents where they were sexually mistreated and perpetrate a feeling of inferiority and worthlessness. These children will have to live with the emotional implications of sex trafficking for the rest of their lives, shattering any chance they have of procuring a happy, peaceful lifestyle even if they do manage to escape from the sex trafficking industry. Therefore, trafficking not only causes immediate physical suffering in children, but it also ensures far-reaching and enduring emotional suffering long after the end of the physical abuse, thus creating another moral consequence of the industry (Leidholdt, 167-183).



## 5. Enough! The Search for a Solution

Here we will examine the attempts that the South African government, and other NGO's (non-governmental organizations) such as International Campaign Against Child Trafficking and Molo Songololo, have put forth in order to put a stop to this growing issue. Although many of these attempts have helped to alleviate some facets of this issue, nothing has put it to an absolute stop and there is a great need for further legislation and activism before this happens.

South Africa has made a weak attempt at best to show that it is dealing with this issue. In 2000, South Africa was one of 117 countries to sign the UN's Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This protocol mandates that these countries must prevent and combat trafficking within their borders. Since signing this document, South Africa has only created "piecemeal" legislation regarding this issue. One piece of legislation that went into effect in 2007 is the Sexual Offenses Act. In summary, this act outlaws owning a brothel; broadens the definition of rape applying it to all sexual penetration without consent regardless of gender; the creation or display of child pornography; and expands the definition of rape to include children. Secondly, South Africa created the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA). This law criminalizes racketeering and works to fight organized crime which frequently plays a large role in the child trafficking industry. Finally, the Immigration Act works on arresting and repatriating illegal foreigners. In effect, this law secondarily victimizes many trafficked children (Hilton). Evidently, these acts do not directly confront the issue of child sex trafficking. At the moment, the South African government is creating a bill titled, Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons, which will help to create tighter laws and restrictions in order to address this growing issue.

In the meantime, the issue has been left up to individual, nonprofit organizations. One organization, Molo Songololo, located in Cape Town, South Africa, is a non-profit that advocates for children on local, national, and international levels. Founded in 1979, this organization strives to protect children's rights, and fights for the issue of child trafficking. They also believe that awareness is one key objective in combating this issue; as a result, they hold many workshops and conferences in order to educate others and spread awareness. They present these workshops to National Parliaments, legislatures, local government officials, parents, and children. They recognize that they need to address this issue on all levels if they are to prevent it. On a local level, Molo Songololo works to empower children and promote their direct participation against child trafficking. They teach children about their rights since they believe that an informed child will be better able to negotiate and protect these rights. They also encourage the children's direct participation by holding workshops that facilitate the children's participation in the law reform process. These workshops help to empower these otherwise vulnerable children so that they will be able to avoid becoming victims themselves. On a political level, Molo Songololo lobbies for law reform (Molo Songololo). For example, they have worked to reform the Sexual Offences Bill which now includes provisions that address the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children (September, S65-S72). Therefore, this organization is working to make the government more accountable for the welfare of these children. Overall, this organization's main objective is to increase awareness and accountability of South African children and the trafficking process, since they realize that knowledge is the first step in bringing a stop to this evil.

Another organization that works against child sex trafficking is the International Campaign Against Child Trafficking (ICACT). This organization works on a global level but

works within Southern Africa specifically. Just as Molo Songololo, they work to create international awareness about child sex trafficking. They create promotional pamphlets for their causes, many of which are available to the public on the internet. These pamphlets help to explain the causes and conditions surrounding sex trafficking and empower people around the globe to take action against it. Additionally, this organization works to advocate for anti-trafficking legislation around the world and offer support services to both victims, and the victim's families ("South Africa; Gangs Target Children for Trafficking").

## **6. Spreading awareness of child sex trafficking**

This section offers suggestions on ways to spread awareness about this growing evil. It also provides guidelines for identifying a sex trafficking industry in your own neighborhood. In order to halt the spread of child sex trafficking, we must spread awareness and let the public know that this is a real issue that occurs around them every day.

In order to combat this growing issue, we must spread awareness and inform the public of this dire situation. There are a number of ways in which to achieve this. First, we must promote educational opportunities to learn about child sex trafficking for both adults and children alike. South African children must be aware of this serious risk. They must learn methods for avoiding dangerous situations, identifying suspicious adult activity, exiting dangerous situations, negotiating with traffickers if they are in fact captured, and contacting the appropriate authorities. Adults must learn how to identify sex traffickers, explain the serious risks to children, and contact the appropriate authorities if they do witness child sex trafficking. Both government and non-government organizations (NGO's) should facilitate workshops in order to

provide this form of education. Specialists should present this information to a wide variety of people, including those who attend and work in schools, hospitals, and clinics.

Aside from educating the public, we also must engage the media in order to spread awareness. Just as corporations help to promote AIDS awareness, companies must endorse child sex trafficking and work to increase awareness and funding to combat the issue. Companies can create products where proceeds go to preventing child sex trafficking just as (product) RED does for the AIDS campaign. Furthermore, organizations such as Molo Songololo can make use of the media to promote their cause. By creating commercials and radio announcements, organizations such as Molo Songololo can reach a greater audience. They can create advertisements that appear on highly accessed websites such as Google or Yahoo! Finally, these organizations can create and distribute informational pamphlets.

Governments can also help to spread child sex trafficking awareness. As governments work to create legislation to prevent this issue, they can update the public on their measures to combat child sex trafficking. They can promote their legislation using advertisements and they can create websites in order to update the public on their progress. These governments can also include funding for child sex trafficking education in their plans as they work towards effective legislation.

Not only is this a growing issue in South Africa, but this affects the United States as well. We can begin by becoming aware of this issue, but we can also learn how to identify sex trafficking situation on a local level. Remember:

- 1.) Sex traffickers can be anyone: white, black, Latino, young, old, wealthy, poor, male or female (Polaris Project Action Center).
- 2.) The victims of sex traffickers can be of any demographic as well.

- 3.) Victims may exhibit some warning signs. They may appear hungry or malnourished, exhibit bruises or physical trauma, may show signs of drug addiction, and may lack good hygiene.
- 4.) Suspected areas may include strip clubs, abandoned buildings, and especially massage parlors. Massage parlors tend to be a hot-spot for child sex trafficking around the globe. Periodically, children may be dropped off at these establishments, but will rarely be seen exiting the building. “Customers” will be seen frequently entering and exiting the building.
- 5.) Many times these children will appear to be foreigners, will not speak the native language, and will carry very little or no belongings with them (Kevin and Soodalter).
- 6.) It is important that if trafficking is even suspected, it must be reported right away. National, state, and local law enforcement have made great steps in recognizing and combating trafficking, but these cases must be reported in order to receive attention. Be sure to collect as much information as possible to better help authorities.

## **7. Conclusion**

Child sex trafficking is a serious issue that affects millions of children around the world. There are still many unanswered questions: How much are the children sold for? What is the psychological development of a sex trafficker? Do these children ever gain a shred of normalcy in their lives even if they do escape? We may never know all the answers, but we can use what we do know to help combat the issue. South Africa is only one country where this issue openly persists; in reality it touches every other country around the globe. The first step to eradicating this growing evil is awareness. Once the general public is acquainted with this topic, they can

then begin to identify situations that may contribute to the sex trafficking industry. This is not an issue where the public can gain awareness and then step back; rather, we must constantly be monitoring our surroundings for signs of slavery and trafficking. This issue is not solely in the hands of national governments, but in our hands. It is our duty to educate others about this injustice, and become aware that the world still contains millions of slaves, all of whom are held against their will. We must learn to open our eyes and identify the injustice that could be occurring right in front of us.

Become observant and aware as you go about your daily activities. Train yourself to look around, look inside businesses, and look at children's faces as you pass them by. Ask yourself, "could that child be a sex slave?" If you do suspect sex trafficking, report it to the police immediately. Make sure that you have collected as much information as you can. Gather the who, what, when, where, and why details and report these to the police. Your participation is crucial and could be the first step to changing the course of one child's life, if not hundreds or thousands of children's lives. However, it is up to everyday people like you to help make a difference.

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