



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

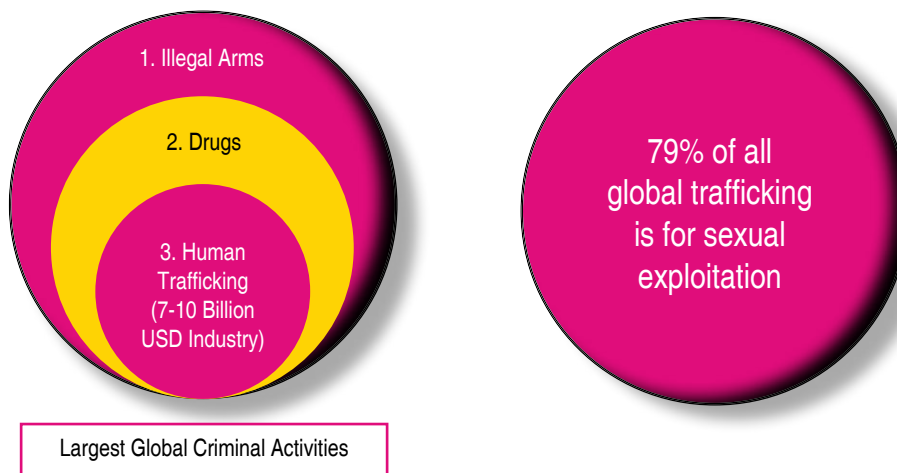
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest international crime, following illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN HONG KONG

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government stated that it was difficult for it to identify trafficking victims amongst illegal immigrants. In the past year, the Government reported only two trafficking convictions and two other reports of trafficking for the purposes of prostitution with insufficient evidence to warrant prosecution.⁴

However, Hong Kong's Immigration Authority reports that hundreds of children are being smuggled from mainland China to Hong Kong to be reunited with their parents. More than 1,500 children illegally crossed the border in 1997. Although the police often classified such cases as human smuggling instead of trafficking in children, extortion, bondage and abuse of children frequently occur in the course of cross-border human smuggling.⁵

Who gets trafficked?

Hong Kong is a point of transit and destination for persons trafficked for sexual exploitation from mainland China and Southeast Asia.⁶ Children are also trafficked from other Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.⁷ Hong Kong is believed to be the second biggest market, after India, for Nepali women and girls being trafficked outside the country.⁸ An article in the American Chronicle stated that among girls trafficked to Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries, around 6,000 alone were Nepalese.⁹

Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived. Countries are considered as:

- 'Sending' or 'origin' – from where children are sent;
- 'Transit' – where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- 'Receiving' or 'destination' – where the children finally end up.

Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries may be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. Hong Kong is a destination and also a place of transit.

CASE STUDY

- A 16 year-old Filipina who worked as a hawker in the province of Bulacan to support her family, including her ailing father, was lured to Hong Kong by a Chinese recruiter known as "Attorney" on the promise of a job as a domestic helper. He said he would pay for her air fare and would handle the processing of her passport. When she went to see the recruiter at his house in Kalookan City, she met two other young women who were also promised jobs in Hong Kong. A few hours after her arrival, she was forced to have sex with six men. The Philippine National Bureau of Investigation believed that the male recruiter might be a member of a Manila-based syndicate with contacts in Hong Kong. They were able to obtain a false passport showing her age to be 21 years old.¹⁰

Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married or single; they come from all types of socio-

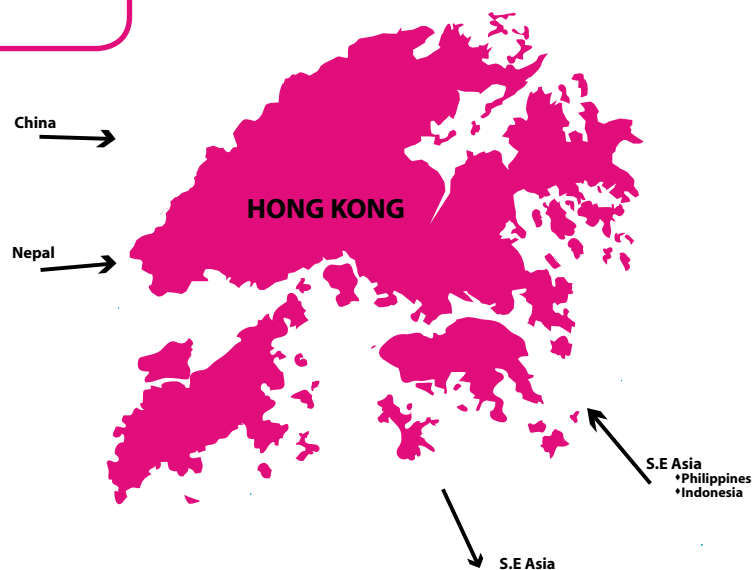
economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions. In Hong Kong, clients of the sex industry are mostly local men, but also to a lesser extent, foreign businessmen and workers.¹¹

Who are the traffickers?

Traffickers can be a stranger or someone the child knows, such as a relative or a friend. Traffickers are often part of an organised criminal network that 'recruits' children and supplies them with fake identification. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life.

For child trafficking, **Hong Kong** is primarily considered as a:

- origin country
- ✓ transit country
- ✓ destination country
- internal/domestic country



CASE STUDIES

- Six Filipina victims were told that they would work as Hong Kong club entertainers. Upon arrival in Hong Kong, they were forced into prostitution. The victims sought assistance from the Philippines Consulate, and the Hong Kong Police worked closely with the Philippines Government to investigate, prosecute and convict two Filipina traffickers who were sentenced to three years' imprisonment.¹²
- A Hong Kong triad trafficked girls as young as 13 across the border from China for commercial sexual exploitation.¹³

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The Government needs to develop specific anti-trafficking laws to effectively penalise all forms of human trafficking and ratify the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*.
- Law enforcement agencies must increase their efforts to proactively identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable groups, vigorously investigate and prosecute sex trafficking cases and ensure that trafficking offenders are convicted and receive appropriate criminal punishments. Data on trafficking cases should also be collected.
- Establish child-friendly procedures to ensure that child victims are not arrested, incarcerated or otherwise punished for acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by the Chinese Government	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for the Chinese Government
<i>Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)</i>	1992	Initial Report – 1995 2003	In response to the 2003 report, the Committee recommends the strengthening of Hong Kong's efforts to identify and investigate trafficking cases, to improve understanding of the issues of trafficking and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted, to develop and adopt a comprehensive policy to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and trafficking in children and to ratify the Trafficking Protocol. The Committee regrets that the application of the Optional Protocol has not yet been extended to Hong Kong SAR and while welcoming the amendments to the Crimes Ordinance aimed at strengthening the protection of children from pornography, it is concerned at the absence of any data on or reported cases of child prostitution in Hong Kong SAR.
<i>Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography</i>	2002	2003 (report did not have specific information for Hong Kong)	N/A
<i>The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children</i>	Not yet	N/A	
<i>ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour</i>	2002	N/A	N/A

Endnotes

- ¹ UNICEF. *UNICEF calls for increased efforts to prevent trafficking of children*. 16 June 2007. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html
- ² UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour. *2008 Human Rights Report: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*. Accessed on 2 March 2009 from: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>
- ⁴ U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*.
- ⁵ Ren, Xin. *Trafficking in Children: China and Asian Perspective*. Accessed on 3 March 2009 from: http://www.no-trafficking.org/content/web/05reading_rooms/China/trafficking_in_china_china_and_asian_perspective.pdf
- ⁶ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour. *2008 Human Rights Report: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*. Accessed on 2 March 2009 from: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>
- ⁷ VB's OFW-Connect.com News. In Asia: Debt Bondage, *Trafficking and State-Imposed Forced Labour*. Accessed on 2 March 2009 from: http://news.ofw-connect.com/Filipino_Workers_News/?p=165
- ⁸ Khatri, Nayan B. Nepal: *The Problems of Trafficking in Women and Children*. Accessed on 3 March 2009 from: http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/annual-meetings/7th-india-2002/downloads/thematic-issues/nepal_trafficking.pdf
- ⁹ Prasai, Surya B. *Call for Global Action to Halt Nepalese Women and Girls Trafficking*. Accessed on 3 March from <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/51873>
- ¹⁰ Human Rights Appeals: "16 Year-Old Girl Trafficked to Hong Kong Given Job Promise as Domestic Helper - Raped Upon Arrival". *Hong Kong Standard* cited in Asian Human Rights Commission. Accessed on 2 March 2009 from <http://www.hrsolidarity.net/mainfile.php/1996vol06no02/130/>
- ¹¹ Zi Teng. "The Sex Trade Industry in Hong Kong: A Call for Activism and Transformation" Accessed on 4 March 2009 from http://www.ziteng.org.hk/platform/pfc03_e.html
- ¹² U.S. Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*.
- ¹³ The Nation, 5 July 1997 cited in *Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation: China and Hong Kong*. Accessed on 3 March 2009 from <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/china.htm>



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