



**STOP**

**SEX TRAFFICKING  
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



# SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN MACAU

## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 per cent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.<sup>2</sup>



### CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN MACAU

Macau is a destination for the trafficking of women and girls from the Chinese mainland, Mongolia, Russia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Central Asia for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Foreign and mainland Chinese women and girls are deceived into migrating voluntarily to the Macau Special Administrative Region for employment opportunities; upon arrival in Macau, some of the victims are passed to local triad groups and forced into sexual servitude through debt bondage, coercion, or force.<sup>3</sup>

Victims are sometimes confined in massage parlours or illegal but widely tolerated brothels, where they are closely monitored, have their identity documents confiscated, are forced to work long hours or are threatened with violence. The control of the victims by organised crime syndicates makes it particularly dangerous for them to seek help.<sup>4</sup>

There have been some initiatives undertaken by the government of Macau to improve the protection of children. The Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) has taken steps toward revising its legal framework, prosecuted its first trafficking case and taken initial steps to protect victims of trafficking. Senior Government officials have made public statements on the dangers of trafficking and the need for greater measures to confront it. The Government has also published anti-trafficking brochures that were displayed at border checkpoints and hospitals.

## Who gets trafficked?

In places where law is weak or not properly enforced, children are less protected and at greater risk of trafficking. Children may also be less aware of the risks of trafficking and more easily deceived.

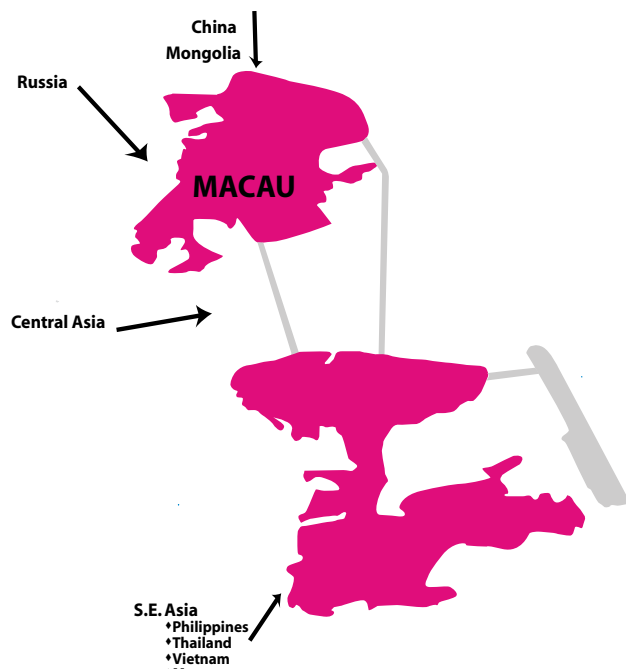
Countries are considered:

- '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 only be sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Macau is a country of transit and destination for trafficking in persons. It is extremely difficult for foreign victims to escape their state of servitude given the lack of services in their native languages and the lack of their governments' diplomatic representation in Macau.

For child trafficking, **Macau** is primarily considered as a:

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



## 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 patronizes the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

The scale of Macau's prostitution industry increases the vulnerability of children, either to be exploited by paedophiles specifically seeking children or other clients of prostitutes. The Government has not taken preventative measures to reduce the demand for child sex tourism, or conduct any awareness campaigns targeting clients of Macau's prostitution industry.<sup>5</sup>

Many of those seeking commercial sex in Macau are from the Chinese mainland. There are over 20 licensed nightclubs in Macau and each makes a net profit of between HK\$3 million and HK\$6 million a month. Since both saunas and nightclubs are openly marketed to prostitute buyers, it is widely assumed that the sex trade in Macau is legal.<sup>6</sup>

Sources in the nightclub industry say there are about 4,000 girls and women from mainland China working in Macau, but it is difficult to say how they got there or whether Macanese and Chinese immigration officials turn a blind eye to the trafficking of young women into the territory. Package deals are available in Hong Kong and Macau for visitors to the saunas and nightclubs. Street-based prostitution also exists, often involving Russian and other Eastern Europeans.<sup>7</sup>

## 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.

Macau, Chinese, Russian and Thai criminal syndicates control Macau's lucrative sex trade. Despite the significant threats involved, the Government has been unwilling to provide victims with necessary witness protection, should they wish to participate in the prosecution of a trafficking offender.<sup>8</sup>

### CASE STUDIES

Macau recently had its first reported prosecution under the crime of international trafficking. There has never been a conviction for trafficking in Macau. In 2008, a Macau Police Officer was reportedly arrested after he blackmailed two women in prostitution for "protection" fees. The Government has undertaken administrative discipline and criminal proceedings against him, and his case now rests in the prosecutor's office.<sup>9</sup>

The press reported six trafficking cases involving 17 women in Macau in 2008. Five cases involved women allegedly exploited in the commercial sex trade, and one case involved the alleged forced labour of three 14-year-old girls employed in a massage parlour. Because of limitations in current Macau law, nearly all of the above cases are being pursued under statutes other than trafficking.<sup>10</sup>

## How can we stop the trafficking of children?

### LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Legislation is required prohibiting all forms of trafficking, as current Macau law prohibits only the trafficking of persons from Macau to outside destinations. Other current laws criminalise the sale or purchase of a person with the intent of placing that person in a state of slavery, and criminalise kidnapping and rape, but these statutes are rarely used to prosecute trafficking crimes.
- Pass, enact and implement the draft anti-trafficking law criminalising all forms of trafficking; create and implement formal victim identification procedures to identify victims of trafficking and train law enforcement officials to use them.
- The Government must push for greater investigations and prosecutions of traffickers under a new comprehensive anti-trafficking law.
- The requirement of double criminality, either for extradition or domestic prosecution of crimes allegedly committed abroad, hampers the prosecution of trafficking offences outlined in articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol. The Government should therefore amend its legislation in order to abolish the requirement of double criminality for extradition and/or prosecution within the mainland of offences committed abroad.

### PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- The Government must take steps to implement coordination and prevention initiatives in possible destination or countries of origin by cooperating with governments in the region for safe migration, awareness-raising on trafficking and repatriation of survivors.
- Although the Macau Government identified 31 victims of trafficking in 2007, none of the victims were given shelter or assistance, and all were likely deported for immigration violations. The Government should make efforts to protect trafficking victims, such as institutionalising child-friendly procedures in law enforcement, and child protection policies in relevant agencies. Child victims must be provided with health and psychosocial care, vocational training, legal counselling and repatriation/reintegration services.
- The Government's protection efforts remain inadequate and there is a lack of institutionalised protection for trafficking victims. MSAR authorities have not designed any systematic, proactive ways to identify and refer assistance victims among vulnerable populations. Specialised services should be provided to child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation on the mainland and the Macau SAR to assist their recovery and reintegration, and ensure that they are specifically designed to address the needs of such victims.
- Public awareness campaigns must be conducted to inform citizens and residents about child trafficking and the sex industry; such campaigns must take place within Macau and at the countries of origin of the victims as well.

### TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

The Government's Social Welfare Bureau has established a 24-hour hotline (Tel 261126) for reporting trafficking and has contracted with a local NGO to provide care for trafficking victims, including counselling services and shelter.

### MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT International: [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net)
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : [www.thebodyshop.com/stop](http://www.thebodyshop.com/stop)

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> UNICEF. *UNICEF calls for increased efforts to prevent trafficking of children*. 16 June 2007. [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_40002.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html)
- <sup>2</sup> UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- <sup>3</sup> US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*. Accessed from: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105656.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Neumann, A Lin and Dennis Chong. "Sex and the gambling man". *The Weekly Standard*. March 26-27, 2005
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*. Accessed from: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105656.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## NOTES



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