



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN SWITZERLAND

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.

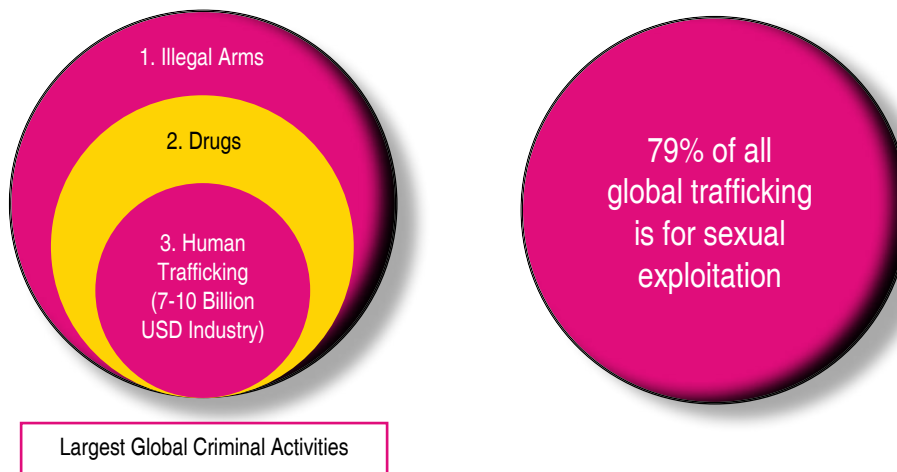
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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 SWITZERLAND

No reliable disaggregated data is available on the number of trafficked children involved in sexual exploitation in Switzerland. This is not only due to the illegal and criminal aspect of child trafficking, but also to the different interpretations of trafficking which result in a lack of systematic identification of victims. Furthermore, offenders are more likely to be counted than victims, as the criminal aspect of trafficking often prevails over the protection of victims.³

Based on international estimations and on the number of persons involved in illegal prostitution in Switzerland, the Federal Police Office estimated that between 1500 and 3000 persons were victims of sex trafficking in Switzerland in 2002, the majority of these being women. These estimates have since been questioned and unfortunately do not differentiate between children and adults.⁴

Cases of child trafficking are scarcely reported to the authorities. Between 1997 and 2000, only three children trafficked for sexual exploitation were identified by the police and there is no data available for the following years.⁵ However, it is estimated that the number of cases is higher than what is actually reported. A working group report on trafficking in human beings revealed that between 2,200 and 9,200 women and children enter Switzerland illegally each year.⁶ Experts agree that these children in vulnerable situations are at very high risk of being exploited in prostitution or for labour.⁷

In 2005, the recognised victim advisory centres in Switzerland identified 17 children out of 126 persons, as victims of forced prostitution and trafficking. In 2006, they also received 13 children out of a total of 90 victims, and in 2007, seven children out of 128 persons were identified.⁸ Isolated cases of adolescent children trafficked for prostitution are occasionally reported, but the collection of clear data on this has not been possible.⁹

The majority of child victims in Switzerland have been trafficked for domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and in some cases were involved in criminal acts, such as drug trafficking or petty theft. There are also suspicions that children in Switzerland are trafficked for adoption - especially when large sums of money have been paid to obtain a child or when officially registered agencies are not used as intermediaries.¹⁰ As happens in other parts of Europe,¹¹ cases of children trafficked and used in the production of pornographic materials are often discovered in Switzerland. A special multi-disciplinary group on "sexual exploitation of children" brings together the Federal Police Service for the coordination of actions against trafficking in human beings and illegal migrants, with government authorities and NGOs.¹²

Who gets trafficked?

In the three cases of trafficked children reported in Switzerland, victims originated from Albania, Cameroon and Brazil.¹³ There is no indication on the gender of the victims and to date there has been no report of children from Switzerland being internally trafficked.¹⁴

Unaccompanied minors are extremely vulnerable to trafficking and each year around 100 of them disappear in Switzerland after they are denied asylum.¹⁵ Girls are at the most at risk of being sexually exploited but this remains largely unreported and the victims often refuse to disclose the abuse. A social worker in charge of unaccompanied children in Zurich reports that cars wait for girls in front of the centre. The Frauen Information Zentrum (FIZ) Centre, an NGO working with trafficked women in Zurich, also reported three cases of sexual exploitation of girls in 2005 and four during the first four months of 2006.¹⁶

In Switzerland, there have also been cases of young girls trafficked for sexual purposes disguised under false marriages. Either the adolescent girls themselves have been married to Swiss citizens using falsified documents, or in other cases, the offenders have married mothers of underage girls and sexually exploited their own step-daughters. Furthermore, it appears

that criminal networks trafficking women for prostitution are purposely targeting mothers of young children.¹⁷ Some children presumed to be trafficked are also being passed off, falsely, as children of asylum seekers.¹⁸ The child victims who manage to escape from sexual exploitation are often quite isolated in Switzerland. Even after being identified as a victim of trafficking or an unaccompanied minor, the children's situation is extremely precarious and alarming, as they are only allowed to remain in Switzerland for the duration of the trial.¹⁹

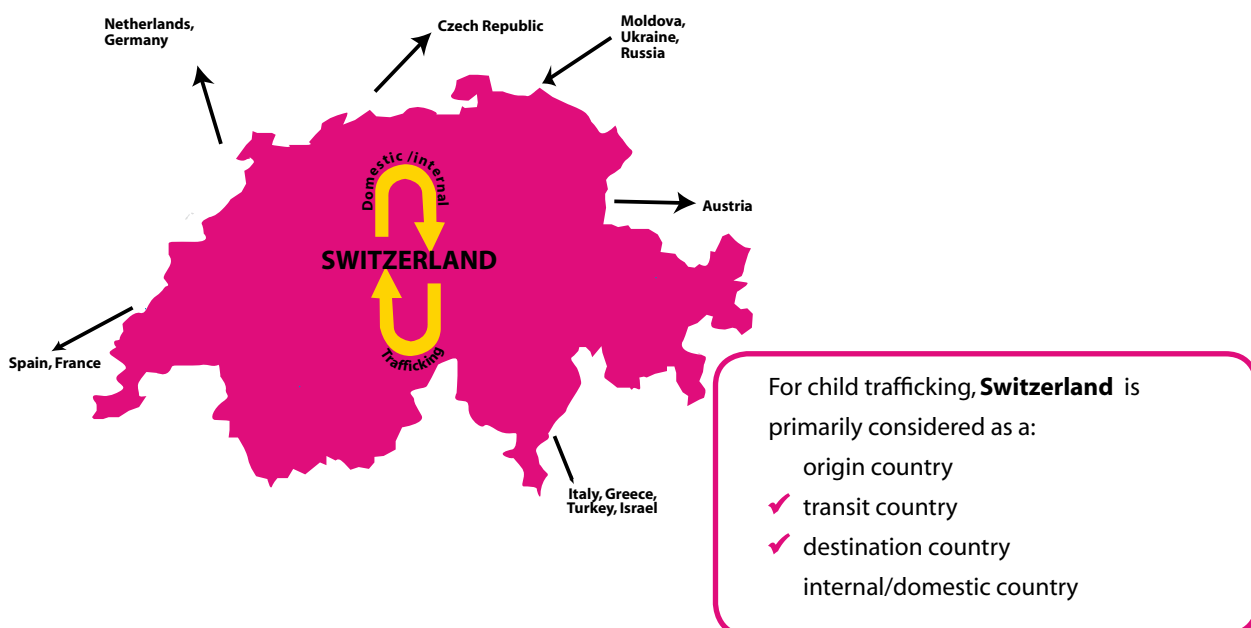
As in other countries of the world, children are being trafficked to Switzerland because they often lack life opportunities, are uneducated, easy to overpower and easy to manipulate and control. They are also in a position where they believe they must help support the family and may even be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children from ethnic minorities or who have experienced child sexual abuse within the domestic setting, children whose family and community life has been disrupted and do not have someone to look out for them are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

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:

- '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 might be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three.

Switzerland is mainly considered as a destination country for trafficking and to a lesser extent a transit country for other European destinations,²⁰ in particular the neighbouring countries of Germany, Italy and France.



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 actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

Switzerland is also a source country for tourists sexually exploiting children while traveling to destinations such as Thailand, the Philippines, India,²¹ Cambodia, Madagascar²² and Morocco.²³

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. Traffickers can be a stranger or someone the child knows, such as a relative or a friend.

In 2007, Swiss authorities reported 28 investigations and nine convictions of traffickers.²⁴ This is relatively less compared to the previous year, with 39 investigations in 2006 and 19 convictions, five for trafficking in human beings and 14 for facilitating prostitution.²⁵ The authorities estimate that trafficking in Switzerland is mainly organised by small networks of family members and acquaintances and not systematically linked to larger criminal organisations.²⁶

CASE STUDIES

Trafficked from Cameroon in the hope of studying in Switzerland

“A” was raised by her grandmother in Cameroon until the latter fell sick and could no longer afford to pay for her high school education. At 16, a man offered to help her study in Europe. She traveled to Switzerland via Paris shortly after with her trafficker, together with two other girls who remained in France. When she arrived in January 2006, she was locked up and raped for five days until she managed to escape. She stayed with an African family she met on the street but a few days later the police arrested her. She spent three days in prison and was then referred to the relevant services, receiving the support of a lawyer and a psychologist.²⁷

Brazilian girl trafficked into prostitution

“M” arrived in Switzerland from Brazil when she was 16 years old, with the help of her aunt who provided her with a fake passport. She was forced into prostitution in Zurich by her aunt, who also coerced her into marriage with her own ex-husband (who had previously raped “M”). She was brought to the FIZ centre by one of the men who had originally purchased sex from her and had then fallen in love with her. Both the husband and the aunt were taken to court and the aunt was sentenced to 10 months prison for encouraging prostitution. However, the aunt was not accused of trafficking.²⁸

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- It is urgent for Switzerland to develop a comprehensive National Plan of Action for the protection of children from trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation, as no national strategy has yet been developed on the issue.
- A National Plan of Action would need to include specific measures to prevent and combat child trafficking for sexual purposes, developed at the federal level and implemented at cantonal level with adequate human and financial resources. Regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms also need to be established for the successful realisation of the plan.
- In light of the limited results in identification of child traffickers and victims, Switzerland should consider strengthening and institutionalising multi-disciplinary trainings at cantonal and local levels for judiciary, police, social services and other actors concerned by child protection to support identification of victims and special assistance.
- Special attention should be given to the identification and protection of unaccompanied minors and measures regarding these particularly vulnerable children should be applied in line with the “best interest of the child” principle enshrined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Switzerland	Date of Reports Submitted
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1997	Initial Report – 2001 Due in 2007 but the report has not yet been submitted
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2006	Due in April 2008 but the report has not yet been submitted.
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	2006	N/A
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2000	N/A
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	Signed in 2008 but not yet ratified	N/A

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Efforts to improve effective identification and assistance of child victims of trafficking and at risk children need to be strengthened through appropriate training on the various services and authorities associated with child victims and also adequate implementation of formalised identification and reporting procedures.
- It is necessary to implement coordination mechanisms and protocols between the different agencies concerned with the protection of children, to support information sharing and collaborations at local and centralised levels.

- Child victims should receive immediate care and protection, taking into consideration the special needs of victims of sexual exploitation and including comprehensive psychosocial and economic assistance to support a long-term recovery process.
- Authorisation to stay in Switzerland should be automatically granted to foreign trafficked children until a durable solution is identified and when return to the country of origin is not possible, specific care arrangements should be made with the best interests of the child in mind.
- It is important that specialised support is provided by adequately trained professionals and that the care services respond to the special needs of child victims, respecting gender, age and cultural background.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

- **The FIZ Makasi Centre** provides consultation and support for victims of trafficking and can be reached by phone on: 01/240 44 22, Monday to Thursday from 9am - 1pm or by email at: contact@fiz-info.ch. For further information, visit www.fiz-info.ch

MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT Switzerland: www.kinderschutz.ch
- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

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- ³ Conférence des directeurs cantonaux des affaires sociales. *Situation et protection des victimes de la traite des personnes en Suisse: rapport sur l'étude SFM mandate par la CSOL-LAVI/CDAS, le SLV/BFE et le SCOTT/fedpol*. 2007. Berne. Accessed from http://doc.rero.ch/lm.php?url=1000,44,4,20071106155244-KS/s_52.pdf.
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- ⁵ UNICEF Schweiz. *Kinderhandel und die Schweiz*. 2007.
- ⁶ *Rapport sur le Protocole facultative du 25 mai 2000 à la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant, concernant la vente d'enfants, la prostitution des enfants et la pornographie mettant en scène des enfants et sur la modification correspondante de la norme pénale relative à la traite des êtres humains*, 2003. Accessed from <http://www.ejpd.admin.ch/etc/medialib/data/kriminalitaet/gesetzgebung/menschenhandel.Par.0005.File.tmp/bericht-br-fakprotokoll-f.pdf>
- ⁷ Terre des hommes, *Les mineurs non accompagnés en Suisse*. 2007
- ⁸ UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
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- ¹¹ ECPAT International. *ECPAT Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: France, Luxembourg, Germany*. Accessed from www.ecpat.net
- ¹² Terre des hommes, *Les mineurs non accompagnés en Suisse*. 2007
- ¹³ UNICEF Schweiz. *Kinderhandel und die Schweiz*. 2007.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ ECPAT Switzerland. *Trafic d'enfants en Suisse: la police et les assistants sociaux doivent être mieux formés*. 2008. www.kinderschutz.ch
- ¹⁶ Terre des hommes, *Les mineurs non accompagnés en Suisse*. 2007
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ UNICEF Schweiz, *Kinderhandel und die Schweiz*, 2007.
- ¹⁹ Terre des hommes, *Les mineurs non accompagnés en Suisse*. 2007
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- ²¹ ECPAT International Global Monitoring Report on the status of action against commercial sexual exploitation of children: Switzerland, 2006.
- ²² US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008*. Viewed at: www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/

- ²³ 'Un Fribourgeois est soupçonné de pédophilie à Marrakech, Le Temps. 2008. http://www.letemps.ch/Page/Uuid/87b28c9c-aa22-11dd-bf59-ad3d6140ad87/Un_Fribourgeois_est_soup%C3%A7onn%C3%A9_de_p%C3%A9dophilie_%C3%A0_Marrakech
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