

## **TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AS A FORM OF SLAVERY IN PHILIPPINES**

Trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion-dollar form of international organized crime, constituting modern-day slavery.

Victims are recruited and trafficked between countries and regions using deception or coercion. They are stripped of their autonomy, freedom of movement and choice, and face various forms of physical and mental abuse.

There are three main types of human trafficking:

- Trafficking for forced labour;
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation;
- Trafficking for the harvesting of tissue, cells and organs.

Although not widely talked about, human trafficking has flourished into many different areas of the world. Philippines is a destination country in addition to being source country. Human trafficking, the illegal trade in human beings for forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation, remains a problem in the Philippines.

According to the US State Department, the Philippines is a “source country and to a much lesser extent, a destination and transit country for men, women, and children who are subjected to trafficking, especially forced prostitution and labor.”

Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. Prostitution is illegal in the Philippines. Still, it has long been known for prostitution, and the internal trafficking of men, women, and children for purposes of domestic servitude, forced labor, forced begging, and sexual exploitation.

Sex trafficking in the Philippines consists of the following forms:

- using employment as a pretext to bring women and children to prostitution,
- using marriage to bring women to sexual slavery,
- pimping women for the use of soldiers,
- and organizing travel packages to include women for sex tourists.

Conservative estimates of women trafficked to prostitution range from 300,000 to 500,000. In CATW-AP research, at least 30% of our victim-respondents would be minors. The majority of them come from the rural areas, had primary to secondary education, belong to families of 6 to 11 members. A striking 75% of those in prostitution are previous victims of sexual abuse.

There are indigenous women trafficked, coming from the following ethnic groups: B’laan, T’Boli, Kaulo, while the Moslems are Maranao, Mandaya, Badjao, Sama, Manobo and Lumad.

Destinations of domestic trafficking are mostly cities in the National Capital Region, Laoag, Cabanatuan, Dagupan, Olongapo, Angeles, Batangas, Cavite, Cebu, GenSan, Kidapawan, Davao and Zamboanga. Trafficking across borders brings women to slavery-like and debt-bondage conditions in Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Syria. But still more are brought to prostitution in the pretext of employment or marriage to Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Hongkong and Cyprus.

Trafficking to Japan and Korea took on a different character since requirements for entertainers to leave have been made stricter. Filipino women are married off to Japanese and Korean nationals, and the former’s visas are paid for. However, cases reveal that women are eventually transferred to the sex industry, especially when they could not pay off their debts to the Japanese facilitator.

In our documentation, the recruiters are mostly women, known to victims as their own relatives. Only 39.6% of the perpetrators are male. However, the women did not count the customers among perpetrators. Also, only 149 of the 287 victims were able to name their perpetrators. Most of those named were their pimps or recruiters. Only two named the juridical organization or prostitution establishment as perpetrator. Other perpetrators named are police officers, soldiers, a judge, a governor, a city councilor, barangay captain, and bar owners.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism. This crime type has been apparent in Asia for many years and has now taken hold in Africa as well as Central and South America. The phenomenon is promoted by the growth of inexpensive air travel and the relatively low risk of prohibition and prosecution in these destinations for engaging in sexual relations with minors.

The children of the Philippines are especially vulnerable and in desperate need of help. An estimated 60,000 to 100,000 children in the Philippines are involved in prostitution rings, with the highest incidence being in tourist areas. Child sex trafficking often occurs in the clandestine enclosures of private residences, where knowing taxi drivers facilitate arrangements for child sex tourists. It has been reported by both government and non-government agencies that a growing number of Filipino boys are victims of sex

trafficking. Equally disturbing is an increasing danger for very young Filipino children who are victims of Internet porn. In clandestine locations they are forced to perform sex acts for paying viewers on the Internet. Among the main causes of child trafficking in the Philippines are poverty, poor economic development, limited employment opportunities, large family sizes, inadequate awareness among families, and the profitable business of child sex tourism. Destiny Rescue has recently established a rescue presence in the Philippines. We have already begun to bring children out of their desperate situations and into our safe homes where they now have a fresh opportunity to re-write their destinies.

There have been multiple signs in the last years that the Philippine government has started to take its fight against trafficking more seriously. Congress ratified the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. The law was further strengthened by the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. This law is considered one of the best legislative measures among developing countries, imposing strict punishment for violators. According to the law, the three categories of trafficking acts carry the following penalties:

- for acts of trafficking: 20 years of imprisonment and a fine of P1 million to P2 million;
  - for promotion the illegal activity: imprisonment for 15 years and a fine of P500,000 to P1 million,
- and
- for qualified trafficking: penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of P2 million to P5 million.

The law said trafficking cases may be filed in places where the offense or any of its elements was committed. The unlawful activity's elements include "acts, means, purpose, and venue."

But as in any other law, proper implementation remains the biggest challenge. The need to improve law enforcement capabilities is imperative in order to push crime prevention and to rescue the victims. Addressing the broken public justice system is necessary to advance criminal accountability. Thankfully, the advocacy is gaining ground. There has been a marked increase in the conviction of traffickers, with the promulgation of court decisions now significantly faster.

In 2014, a dedicated National Anti-Trafficking Unit under the Philippine National Police's Women and Children Protection Center was created.

Last December, the government of Taguig city government raised the bar in local legislation by passing not only a city-level ordinance but also ordinances in all of its barangays against human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children,

Today, four front-runners in the fight against human trafficking are joining forces with the goal of consolidating the efforts of local governments in Metro Manila. The Department of Interior and Local Government-NCR, together with the International Justice Mission, ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, and the government of Taguig are holding a summit, "Breaking Free: End Modern-Day Slavery," with the theme "Unifying Local Government Units Against Human Trafficking" at Enderun Colleges in McKinley Hill, Taguig.

The summit is aimed at encouraging the rest of the cities in Metro Manila to enhance the capacity of all local offices involved in the fight against human trafficking.

Indeed, there have been tangible results in the advocacy, strengthening hope for public justice system which includes law enforcement, prosecution, the judiciary and social services. Toward a transformed public justice system, not only the commitment of the national government agencies concerned but also the dedication of our local government units is necessary. It is also hoped that the improving trust of the general public will result in the heightened participation of various sectors, particularly civil society organizations, religious groups and the youth.

#### Список використаних джерел

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