



**STOP**

**SEX TRAFFICKING  
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



# SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN TAIWAN

## 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 percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.<sup>2</sup>



### CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN TAIWAN

Taiwan is a destination country for the trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes. There is a lack of information on the scale of child trafficking in Taiwan. The situation of internal trafficking or indigenous children being trafficked is also unclear. The phenomenon has transformed; call-girl rings still exist but more children are now involved in sex trade through the Internet. In 2007, Taiwan authorities prosecuted 423 individuals for suspected human trafficking cases, resulting in 74 convictions - including 16 convictions for the sexual exploitation of minors.<sup>3</sup>

## Who gets trafficked?

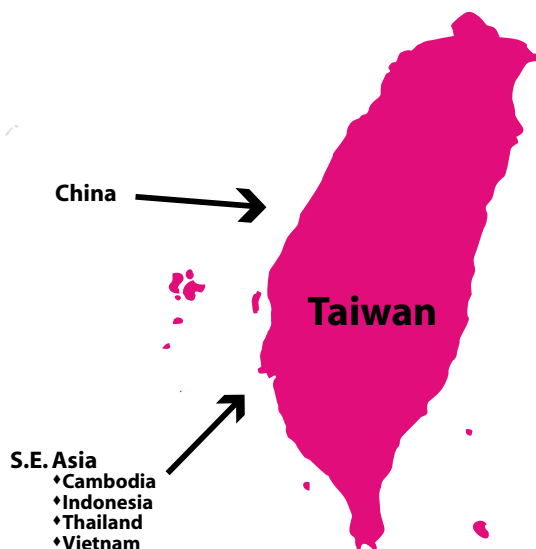
While child trafficking occurs in Taiwan, few cases have been identified and the victims are mainly from China. Taiwan is known more widely as a destination country for the trafficking of adults. Victims of trafficking in Taiwan are mainly from China and Southeast Asia - Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. Taiwanese women are also trafficked to Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>4</sup> An ECPAT Taiwan survey that involved 62 underage Chinese girl victims found that 85.7 percent did not like what they did and more than 60 percent had to give all their earnings to their bosses.<sup>5</sup>

The demand for sex drives child sex trafficking globally while poverty, domestic violence and abuse, discrimination and the desire for a better life makes children vulnerable. Children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked because they are often less educated, easy to overpower and easy to convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children in refugee camps, 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.



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

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

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## 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 socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions. In Taiwan, there is a demand for sexual services with children, particularly girls. Thus, traffickers are recruiting victims to meet this demand. Moreover, as Taiwan's economy has grown over the past decade, some Taiwanese nationals and tourists travel abroad to become involved in child sex tourism, particularly in Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup>

### CASE STUDY

- The Taiwanese military launched a probe into the case of a navy lieutenant named Wang, who was caught hiring an underage girl for prostitution in Kaohsiung. The military found that 23 soldiers and officers had been in touch with the girl and two other underage prostitutes, following recommendations by Wang.<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 and transportation arrangements. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life. For Taiwan, traffickers can be part of criminal gangs, such as the "snake" groups or people seeking to exploit children for money.

### CASE STUDY

- Mei, a 17 year girl from rural China, believed a family friend about a factory job in Taiwan with good pay and benefits. The family friend was actually the "recruiter" of a trafficking gang. Once in Taiwan, Mei was picked up by other members of the trafficking gang. She was locked up and forced into prostitution. The gang kicked her out six months later when she became pregnant. Taiwan police found her and took her to the detention centre for illegal Chinese migrants.<sup>8</sup>

## How can we stop the trafficking of children?

Due to its political status, Taiwan has not been able to ratify major international conventions or legal instruments related to children, the commercial sexual exploitation of children or child trafficking. Nevertheless, regardless of Taiwan's political situation, appropriate prevention and protection efforts must be utilised to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

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## LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Although the legal definition of a “child” is anyone under 18 years old in the *Law to Suppress Sexual Transactions Involving Children and Juveniles*, a smaller punishment is given to offenders who have sex with children between 16 and 18 years than those who exploit children under 16. The punishment should be the same for all offences, so that any children under 18 years old are equally protected.
- As the new *Human Trafficking Legislation Act* was passed in January 2009, the law enforcement authorities (including police, prosecutors and judges) must receive training on formal procedures for trafficking cases. It should focus on improving their strategies for the identification of child trafficking victims, provision of child-friendly procedures and improving the judicial system so that victims can safely assist in prosecutions of traffickers.

## PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- The Government should conduct awareness raising campaigns that target children vulnerable to trafficking, such as girls in rural China, and a parallel campaign for the general public in Taiwan.
- Public awareness campaigns need to increase and include activities to reduce the demand for sexual services from children.

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

- Police: 110 / +886-2-2388-3095
- ECPAT Taiwan: +886-2-2552-6616

## MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT Taiwan: <http://www.ecpat.org.tw>
- 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)

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## 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/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/>
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> ECPAT Taiwan. *Trafficked Young Victims in Taiwan: A Report by ECPAT Taiwan*. 2003.
- <sup>6</sup> ECPAT International. *ECPAT International Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Taiwan*. Bangkok. 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>
- <sup>7</sup> Lok-sin, Loa. "Groups question military discipline, sex education". *Taipei Times*. March 6, 2009. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/03/06/2003437687>
- <sup>8</sup> "Human Trafficking Growing Worst" *Taipei Times*. January 2006. Accessed at: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/01/21/2003290027>

## NOTES



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