

Human Trafficking and Borders

“Is it a crime to sell women? They sell footballers, don’t they.” Interview with Milorad Milakovic, a slave trafficker in Bosnia, Andrew Cockburn, *21st Century Slaves*, National Geographic, September 2003, pp.2-25. This is the rationale of persons who buy, sell, brutalize, and exploit other human beings for profit.

The trafficking of persons has increased at a disproportionate rate. It is estimated that 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders. About 80 percent of trafficking victims are female. Trafficking generates approximately \$13 billion a year worldwide, including \$7 billion through commercial sex exploitation. In Peru, hundreds of women are targeted by criminal gangs that transport them to other Latin American countries, the United States, Europe, and Japan for sexual slavery. Wade F. Horn, *Human Trafficking victims need our help*, Chicago Sun Times, Jun. 4, 2005, at Editorial.

To address the topic of trafficking and borders, I will focus on underlying causes of trafficking, the connection between organized crime and trafficking, and Peru’s response in this area.

What are the underlying causes for trafficking of persons? Liberalization of trade, advanced technology, and corruption has contributed to the dramatic increase in human trafficking. “These developments...have unleashed a sinister ‘assembly’ that threatens regional and national security and international stability—global organized crime.” Luz Estella Nagle, *Latin America: Views on Contemporary Issues in the Region, the Challenges of Fighting Global Organized Crime in Latin America*, 26 Fordham Int’l L.J. 1649, 1651 (2003).

Women are often tricked into applying for jobs as au pairs, hotel clerks, and maids in other countries. Little do they know that this is a front for sexual slavery. Another method of trafficking is through Entertainment Visas. Women that are bought or sold are taken to other countries under the guise of Entertainment Visas, i.e. the women are presented as “artists.” Thus, the women enter a different country “legally”, however the women have been taken from their home countries via illegal means to enter another country and perform illegal acts.

Why the rise in women and children for sale? Unlike drugs, a woman or a child can be sold over and over.

Borders and Organized crime in Peru:

“By the end of the 1990s, international criminal organizations, were firmly established in the Latin America and engaged in money laundering, drugs, and weapon trafficking, prostitution and commercial land development.” Nagle, *supra*, at 1662. A report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) claimed that Japanese and South Korean organized crime groups work closely with Peruvian organized crime groups. Women have been shipped as if they were commercial products from the Peruvian ports of Callao and Paita. Paola Ugaz, *Criminal Gangs Lure Peruvian Women into Sex Slavery Abroad*, EFE News Services, Mar. 18, 2005.

The IOM study reported that there is a preference for women from the Amazon region because of their “exotic looks and stereotypes of sexual performance.” Traffickers take women from the north of Peru and the Amazon region to Lima, and to the south of Peru. Lima is the most important city in Peru for trafficking and as a connection to

global trafficking. Other “hot spots” for sexual slavery are Cusco and the surrounding area of Lake Titicaca. These “hot spots” are destinations for sexual tourism involving adolescents. The IOM report also found that cities close to mine and timber industries have also become infested with sexual slavery. Available at: International Organization for Migration, <http://www.iom.int/en/archive/pbn180305.shtml#item3> (last visited March 30, 2006).

Peru’s Response to protecting victims of trafficking

Peru does not seem to place a high priority on protecting former victims of trafficking. In 1988, Irene Oblitas Arone was trafficked to Japan where members of the Japanese Mafia, bought her and forced her into sexual slavery. Upon return to Peru, Irene was victimized by government social services and by members of the media. In addition, members of law enforcement were accused of not providing adequate protection from retaliation from her traffickers after her identity was leaked. Moreover, there were no services or facilities available to care for her. *International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights Subcommittee, House Committee on International Relations*, June 24, 2004 (statement of Michele Clark, Director of the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies).

Recommendations to crackdown on trafficking should include stricter anti-trafficking legislation, improved enforcement of existing legislation, and greater coordination between international security organizations such as Interpol and the Peruvian government. In addition, Peru should provide comprehensive “after-care” for victims covering protection from retaliation and rehabilitation through local NGOs.