

The recent Rise of Trafficking in Human Beings

The horrific practice of trafficking in human beings has long been a serious problem throughout the world, but in the last fifteen years trafficking from European countries has been fuelled by the social dislocations, increasing pockets of poverty, gender imbalance, bureaucratic chaos, and legislative vacuums resulting from the collapse of communism.

Women already disenfranchised within their communities are most often those who fall prey to traffickers: ostracized minorities, women without employment or future economic prospects and girls without family members to look out for them or who have fallen outside of the educational system. These girls and women are lured by traffickers into leaving their countries, believing that they will work in the West as dancers, hostesses, or nannies, and instead find themselves forced to have sex for the profit of the men and women who purchased them.

In order to secure their silence and compliance, traffickers threaten, beat, rape, drug and deprive their victims of legitimate immigration or work documents. Women are forced to sell themselves in brothels, often receiving several clients per day. They rarely see any wages for their work; in fact, most victims are kept in indentured servitude and told that they owe their traffickers or the brothels owners for their own purchase price and for the price of procuring working papers and travel documents.

The rings of traffickers are often vast, extremely well connected to police and government officials, well-hidden, and reach across borders and continents. Traffickers in human beings are also known to traffic in weapons and drugs, and to use trafficking in human beings to bring in initial cash flow to support the riskier traffic in drugs and arms. Human beings, being reusable commodities that can be sold and resold, are both more lucrative and less risky to traffic than drugs and arms, in that traffickers of human beings are rarely prosecuted for this particular offense.

While between 700,000 and four million women are trafficked each year, only a fraction of those are known to have received assistance in order to escape trafficking. Many are re-victimized by being deported from the countries in which they are found, sanctioned by law when attempting to return to their countries of origin, and ostracized within their communities and families.

Governments appear to have recognized the importance of the issue; many having ratified international instruments established to eradicate trafficking in human beings. Nevertheless, trafficking is neither slowing, nor is the prosecution of traffickers or the protection of their victims becoming any more certain.

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Vocabulary

Disenfranchised: having no rights.

A- Guided commentary (14 points)

1. What favors trafficking in human beings in Europe according to the text?
2. Referring to the text, who are the main victims of traffickers? Why?
3. In your own words and basing on the text, state the working conditions of the victims.
4. Do you think that it is possible to put an end to human trafficking? Give reasons.

B- Translation (06 points)

Translate into French, from “In order to secure their silence” down to “borders and continents”.