



**STOP**

**SEX TRAFFICKING  
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



# SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN PAKISTAN

## 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.

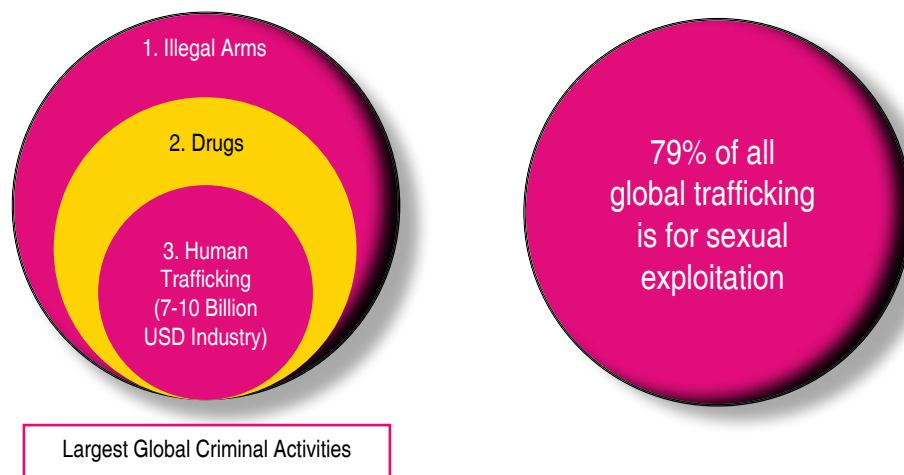
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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



### CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN PAKISTAN

There is extensive trafficking of children from Bangladesh and other South Asian countries to destinations within Pakistan, largely for the purposes of forced prostitution. India and Pakistan are the main destinations for children under 16 who are trafficked from South Asia. Awareness of the problem of sexual abuse is poorly acknowledged in Pakistan, particularly by the government. Underground sexual exploitation of children, including boys, is reported to be widespread within the country.<sup>3</sup>

Children from the Afghan refugee community are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation because of their extreme poverty and a lack of protection and parental supervision. Peer pressure is another important factor, particularly in the cases of *zenanas* and *chawas* (boys with transvestite and feminine characteristics), who make up the majority of boy victims of prostitution in Lahore.<sup>4</sup>

At a focus group discussion in Peshawar, key Afghan informants and adolescents admitted that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is more pervasive than most people realise, and that limited economic opportunities have led to increases in child labour and the number of children forced into prostitution. The adolescent boys commented that street children often get picked up by men and are sexually exploited in return for money. 10.1 percent of Afghans interviewed by UNICEF knew children in their communities, most of them boys, who sold sex for money.<sup>5</sup>

In parts of Pakistan, it is common for rich and influential men to keep boys for sexual gratification, a process known as *bachabazi*. In a society where the sexes are strictly segregated, victims are usually teenage boys who may be dressed up as girls and taken as “mistresses”. They are forced to dance for the entertainment of older men, are sexually abused and are also sometimes sold.

Existing child protection and rehabilitation services in Pakistan are highly inadequate. There is a dire need for the government to establish services to address the issue of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in a meaningful way. There is no mandated system for reporting child sexual exploitation, abuse and neglect, leading to a paucity of reliable statistics and published data on the prevalence of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The media sometimes but infrequently highlights specific cases of a heinous nature – particularly if a child is sexually abused then murdered – but such reporting can lead to the dangerous assumption that child sexual exploitation and abuse are rare.<sup>6</sup>

Laws that criminalise prostitution make no distinction between adults and children. This means that children trafficked and forced into prostitution are treated as adults in the legal system and face punishment rather than support or protection if convicted. Pakistan’s legal system also places the burden of guilt on those selling sex or the sexually exploited/abused rather than on those paying for them or those who force or persuade children into prostitution.

## CASE STUDY

As daylight fades, boys aged between 8 and 18 begin to gather in and around the Old City of Lahore. Those frequenting the same haunts know by their signals and mannerisms that many of these boys are waiting at specific spots to be picked up by men for sex.

Resting against the grille by the Minar-i-Pakistan, a 60 metre-high monument for independence, a teenage boy looks around. He is dressed in traditional shalwar-kameez, loose trousers and a long shirt. The boy against the grille speaks to no one until a smartly dressed man in tightly fitting blue jeans and a black pullover approaches him. Within seconds another older man appears from nowhere and places his arm around the boy. He says something to the young man in blue jeans who turns to leave.

A Community Project Officer for the government of the Punjab and also for Pehchaan, a Lahore-based non-governmental organisation, confirms that the young boy had been approached for sex. His pimp runs a tea stall behind the Lahore Fort, where the boy also works as an errand boy.<sup>7</sup>

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The Office of the Prime Minister established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Trafficking, Smuggling and Illegal Immigration, charged with developing a comprehensive policy to combat such problems. The Federal Government has also set up an inter-agency task force to combat human trafficking, mandated to assess related legal loopholes and improve inter-agency cooperation. However, such structures focus on human trafficking in general, and not on trafficking in children for sexual purposes.<sup>8</sup>

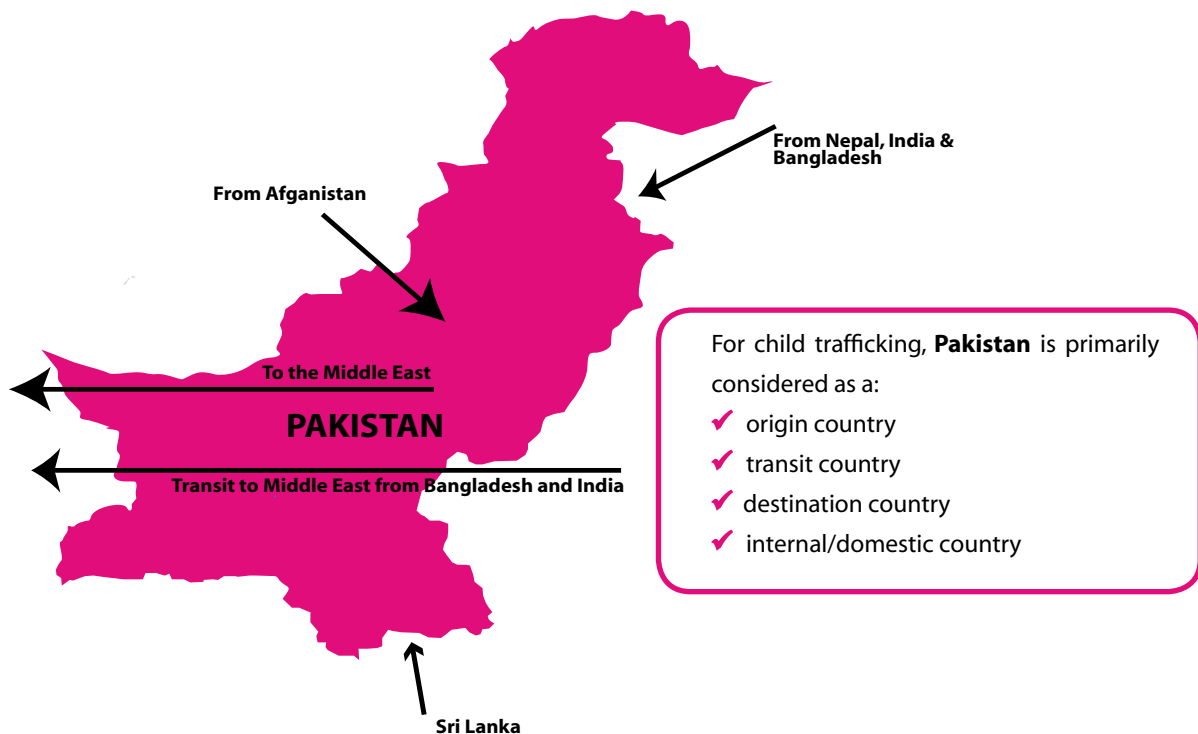
## Who gets trafficked?

In places where law is weak or not properly enforced, children are less protected and at greater risk of trafficking. Children may also be less aware of the risks of trafficking and more easily deceived.

Countries are considered as:

- '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 may only be sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Pakistan is a significant source, destination, and transit country for women, and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Pakistan faces a considerable internal trafficking problem reportedly involving thousands of women and children trafficked to settle debts and disputes, or forced into sexual exploitation or domestic servitude. According to one NGO, children as young as six years old are forced into domestic service, and face physical and sexual abuse.<sup>9</sup>



In addition, some NGOs contend that Pakistani girls are trafficked to the Middle East for sexual exploitation. Pakistan is also a destination for women and children from Bangladesh, India, Burma, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. Women from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, and Burma are trafficked through Pakistan to the Gulf.<sup>10</sup>

## 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.

A Bengali, Burmese or Nepali girl can be sold in Pakistan for US\$1,500 - 2,500 depending on factors such as her age, appearance, etc.<sup>11</sup> Auctions of girls are arranged for three kinds of buyers: rich visiting Arabs (sheiks, businessmen, visitors, state-financed medical and university students), wealthy local gentry, and rural farmers.<sup>12</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. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life.

In Pakistan, young girls (sometimes as young as 9 years old) have been sold by their families to brothels in big cities as sex slaves. Often this occurs because of poverty or debt, whereby the family feels they have no other way to raise the money than to sell the young girl. Cases have also been reported where wives and sisters have been sold to brothels to raise money for gambling, drinking or consuming drugs.<sup>13</sup>

Children trafficked into Pakistan for sexual exploitation may be bought by 'agents' in Afghanistan who trick young girls into coming to Pakistan for well-paying jobs. Once in Pakistan they are taken to brothels (called Kharabat) and forced into sexual slavery.<sup>14</sup>

## How can we stop the trafficking of children?

### LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Pakistan's laws on child trafficking need to be urgently strengthened to consistently protect all children against trafficking for sexual purposes. The Trafficking Ordinance's offence of child trafficking does not include cases where children are threatened, tricked or coerced into providing consent to be trafficked. Since its provisions are limited to trafficking in and out of Pakistan, it leaves out cases of internal trafficking.
- Pakistan's Prostitution Ordinance appears to address cases of internal trafficking by prohibiting the transport of a woman or girl into a province for prostitution, but does not include cases involving trafficking in and out of Pakistan, nor does it prohibit most of the activities that constitute trafficking, such as transferring, harbouring, or receiving a child for purposes of prostitution. Moreover, it is limited to female children and offers no protection to boys.
- With the integration of the *National Plan of Action on CSEC* into the National Plan of Action on Children, the Government of Pakistan must ensure that this does not undermine the importance and commitment of translating the provisions against child trafficking into actions. The Government needs to allocate an adequate budget and work on the provisions against CSEC in consultation with relevant government agencies and NGOs.
- The commercial sexual exploitation of boys is not properly understood and its existence is not acknowledged. As a result, boys receive minimal social and legal protection. This particular form of exploitation should be officially acknowledged and provisions to protect boys need to be included in all policies, programmes and legal provisions throughout the country.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by the Government of Pakistan	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Pakistan
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1990	Initial Report - 1993 Second Report - 2003 Third Report due 2007 but not yet submitted	In 2003, the Committee stated that greater coordination is still required among the different bodies of the Government of Pakistan and at provincial and local government levels, for implementing and monitoring the CRC. In fact, while some efforts to improve coordination and cooperation to combat CSEC have emerged at national level, these are in the early stages and must be further developed in order to produce effective results. Coordination and cooperation between government and civil society to end violations of children's rights are scarce and often lack long term strategic vision and planning.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Signed in 2001 but not yet ratified	N/A	N/A

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by the Government of Pakistan	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Pakistan
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	Not yet	N/A	N/A
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2001	N/A	N/A

## PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- There are no specialised child protection units in Pakistan, though plans to establish these have been in the pipeline for the past few years. While the *Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JJSO) 2000* represented an important achievement in terms of offering greater protection to girls and boys coming into conflict with the law, its actual implementation has been slow, and the child-friendly procedures it proposes have not been consistently implemented across the country.<sup>15</sup> Child protection units specialising in investigating crimes against children should be established and staffed with officers properly trained on how to deal with child victims of crime. Currently, a draft Child Protection Bill is before the Parliament for adoption.
- There is also a need to establish specialised rehabilitation centres for children victimised through sexual exploitation and trafficking, with trained staff to respond to their specific needs. A formally structured referral system also needs to be set up.
- Pakistan must ratify the *Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, and sign and ratify the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*.
- Pakistan has not submitted a state report on the *Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography* and should make it a priority to do so.
- Standards of institutional care and protection should be established for organisations providing support to children rescued from trafficking and sexual exploitation. Mechanisms for building the capacity of such organisations and monitoring the quality of the services provided must be put in place.
- Trafficking and practices of sexual exploitation of boys in Pakistan must be addressed, criminalised and effectively prosecuted. Specialised outreach programmes and services for boy victims should be developed and implemented in areas of the country where these practices are especially prevalent.



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

**Anti-Trafficking Unit, Federal Investigation Agency**

**Help Line: 111- 345- 786**

List of offices & contact numbers: <http://www.fia.gov.pk/contact.htm>

Online Reporting: [http://www.fia.gov.pk/casehistory/site/hlp\\_complaints.php](http://www.fia.gov.pk/casehistory/site/hlp_complaints.php)

## MORE INFORMATION

- Pakistan Paediatric Association (PPA): [www.ppa.org.pk](http://www.ppa.org.pk)
- Working Group against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation; [www.wgcsae.org](http://www.wgcsae.org)
- 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> ECPAT International, *Situational Analysis Report on Prostitution of Boys in Pakistan*. 2006.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> PPA-UNICEF, 'Protection Assessment Among Refugees and Host Communities in Major Urban Areas of Pakistan' (NWFP Report), 2002.
- <sup>6</sup> ECPAT International. 'ECPAT International Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Pakistan.' Bangkok, 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>.
- <sup>7</sup> Accessed at: [www.kenyanewsnetwork.com/artman/publish/article\\_2240.shtml](http://www.kenyanewsnetwork.com/artman/publish/article_2240.shtml) on March 11, 2009.
- <sup>8</sup> ECPAT International. 'ECPAT International Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Pakistan.' Bangkok, 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>.
- <sup>9</sup> US State Department "Trafficking in Persons Report," 2008 viewed at [www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/)
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> 'Rights-South Asia: Slavery Still A Thriving Trade,' IPS, 29 December 1997.
- <sup>12</sup> CATW. 'Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific.' Accessed at: [www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/pakistan.htm](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/pakistan.htm) on March 11, 2009.
- <sup>13</sup> Bushell, Andrew. *Indigenous Peoples of Africa and Asia Magazine*. Accessed at: [www.ipooa.com/pakistan\\_slave\\_trade.htm](http://www.ipooa.com/pakistan_slave_trade.htm) on March 11, 2009.
- <sup>14</sup> Hughes, Donna M. 'Sex Slave Jihad.' *FrontPageMagazine.com*. 27 January 2004.
- <sup>15</sup> ECPAT International. 'ECPAT International Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Pakistan.' Bangkok, 2006. <http://www.ecpat.net>.



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