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Transactions

Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women
(Stichting Religieuzen Tegen Vrouwenhandel)

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‘Casa Del Migrante’ in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Having lived abroad for thirty-seven years, spending the last thirteen years founding a new community in Latvia, I was offered a Sabbath time in Berkeley, California by my congregation. On the way there I stopped in El Paso, Texas and crossed the Mexican border to visit a project which is run by the Dominicans in Juarez (a town infamous because of its high murder rate) called the ‘Casa Del Migrante’ (the migrant’s house).

Everybody wants to cross the border

This house was established for the so called deportees, people who, under inhuman circumstances and sometimes after walking through the desert for months or even years, try to cross the border into the United States. Most of them arrive thirsty, hungry and with blistered feet carrying all their belongings in a plastic bag (which contains no money, food or decent clothes). During their journey many of the girls and women have been raped and the men robbed of their paltry possessions.

But once they have crossed the border they are arrested and detained in a cell. The aim is to deport them from the United States as quickly as possible.

The stories these men, women and often children have to tell are heartrending. It is obvious that nobody crosses the border in search of adventure. The political and economic circumstances at home in Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala are so atrocious that people will try almost anything in order to survive. If they don’t succeed, the feeling of disappointment and despair is enormous. Most of the deportees have no address to which they can return. In the ‘Casa Del Migrante’ they have the chance to take a shower. Here they also get food, clothes, medical help and a place to sleep for one night. Sometimes they are given support and advice in dealing with the authorities.

Heartrending stories

Many of these people have lived for years in the United States and have a husband, wife or even children living there. They were caught by the authorities, for example, because they weren’t able to show any official documents while paying a visit to a hospital. If they need medical help they are advised to return to their own countries.

I talked to Rosy, a wonderful woman who had lived in the United States with her family for 16 years. She has been working in the ‘Casa Del Migrante’ for a year, waiting for her green card so she can return to her family. She began to cry because her son (who only managed to cross the border because another woman pretended to be his mother) now serving in the United States army was leaving for a tour of duty in Afghanistan and she could not say goodbye to him.

‘Ni una mas!’ (Not one more) written on the cross at the American-Mexican border. Every nail represents a murdered migrant. Taking pictures was not allowed, so the two fathers who were my alibi for taking the picture were later taken out)

Many immediately try to cross the border again

The priests go to ‘El Punte’, the notorious border post, to pick up the ‘aliens’. Sometimes there are as many as 50 or even 200 a day, 7 days a week. The next day they have to get up at 5am in order to leave the Casa before 6am. Some can go to a ‘home’ address and are allowed by the bus company to travel paying only half of the fare. Most of them, however, have no idea where to go and make an attempt to cross the border again the same day. In such circumstances it is not strange that young women prostitute themselves in order to make money to try to cross the border again. But even those who don’t sell their bodies run the risk of ending up being trafficked.

Sr. Marjolein Bruinen OP, co-worker SRTV

Police in South Africa Arrest Human Trafficking Ring

Police in Johannesburg have rescued 21 Thai women believed to be human trafficking victims from an alleged brothel, a spokesperson said on Sunday.

“We suspect that they may be victims of human trafficking,” said Paul Ramaloko, spokesperson for the Hawks specialised crime-fighting unit. “We really couldn’t establish whether they are victims of trafficking or not. So what we have done is we have removed them to a place of safety and then we are just going to conduct some interviews with them.”

Police acted on a tip-off early on Saturday morning that the women, who range from 23 to 27 years old, had been trafficked and were being sexually exploited in Kempton Park, he said.

The women had all been in South Africa for less than a month. A South African woman was arrested for operating an illegal brothel. The Thai women’s passports were recovered alongside cash and a small amount of heroin, said Ramoloko.

AFP – News24 South Africa
May 30, 2010

Reflections on Human Trafficking

In 2009, Carlos Mesters, who is a Carmelite brother, wrote a short book on Discussions and Theological Reflections on Human Trafficking. Br. Arie Kuil, board member of the SRTV and fellow brother, received a copy of the book and was enthusiastic about it. He had talks with the SRTV and discovered that good theological reflections concerning Human Trafficking had been sought after for a long time.

Carlos Mesters has lived and worked in Brazil for many years. The book was of course written in Portuguese. After consulting Carlos Mesters, it was decided to translate and edit it.

The subjects in the original edition have remained unchanged. There are reflections on sexual exploitation, the exploitation of children, slavery, compulsory migration and 'being called on'. All the Brazilian stories which were given as examples were adapted into stories of similar situations throughout the world as Human Trafficking is a universal problem and is found everywhere. In this way, the book touches on the enormity of the problem.

The Dutch edition, which will be available in the summer of 2010, will not be published as one book. Five separate booklets will be presented in one cover. Each book contains prayers and suggestions for hymns and Bible texts. In addition Carlos Mesters' own texts will be included on each separate subject within the theme of Human Trafficking. The text adaptations and the choice of prayers will be made by Jan Brock. The illustrations have been made available by Sister Ludwina Foolen, who belongs to the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters at Veghel (a town in the south of the Netherlands).

The Reflections on Human Trafficking may be used for a devotional service, for small group discussions, as subject material for adult catechism sessions or for discussion groups within the congregations themselves. The subject material is especially suited to young people's groups, open evenings etc. The SRTV hopes that an English edition will be ready for publication later this year.

Ivonne van de Kar, coordinator SRTV

Vietnam and Laos Strengthen Co-operation in Fighting Human Trafficking

Concrete measures to combat human trafficking and provide assistance for its victims topped the agenda of a workshop between Vietnam and Laos on March 30 and 31.

An agreement on human trafficking between the two governments has also been drafted at the event. It is expected to be signed by the end of this year.

The Vietnamese delegation to the workshop, which was held in the Lao capital of Vientiane, was headed by major-general Vu Hung Vuong, deputy head of the Crime Prevention General Department under the Ministry of Public Security, and the Lao delegation was led by Thummali Vongphachan, Chief of the Secretariat of the Laos National Steering Committee on Human Trafficking.

Addressing the ceremony, Vu Hung Vuong underlined the adverse impact of human trafficking on people, especially women and children. He also called on the two countries' high-ranking committees and other relevant ministries and agencies to closely cooperate in the combat against human traffickers, especially those operating across borders, and providing aid for the victims.

Voice of Vietnam, April 01, 2010

Cyprus Deputies to Join Wider Effort to End Trafficking

Cypriot MPs decleared they were willing take part in efforts to create a European network to combat human trafficking. The commitment was made during a meeting with British Conservative Party MP and Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the trafficking of women and children, Anthony Steen.

The meeting was attended by the chairmen of the House Committees for Human Rights, Criminal Affairs, Gender Equality and Interior Affairs. The proposed pan-European network aims to coordinate the efforts of European parliaments, reach decisions on common practical measures, check the results of these efforts, exchange views and cooperate on legal matters. All participating MPs expressed their readiness to join the network and informed Steen on the policies and measures that are followed in Cyprus to combat the phenomenon.

They said the local legal framework was completely harmonised with European acquis communautaire and international treaties.

Speaking after the meeting, House Human Rights Committee Chairman Sophocles Fyttis of DIKO said Cypriot authorities were keen to eliminate the crime in Cyprus.

"Some serious measures have been taken to reduce this phenomenon, such as changing the way artist visas are issued, continuous checks on the establishments they are working in, informing women and other workers in their language and creating a shelter for victims of human trafficking," said Fyttis. He added that he and his counterparts had expressed their enthusiasm and the creation of a European network. "The network will exchange views, coordinate, one parliament will help the other based on legislative experiences and efforts," said Fyttis. He pointed out that the financial crisis and increase in unemployment was bound to exacerbate the phenomenon.

www.cyprus-mail.com, April 17, 2010

Happy are Those Who are Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

Her name doesn't sound very Dutch. Her life story is not a typical one. Her name is Mayenka Albarracin. Mayenka has lived in exile since 1977 when she was granted a permit of residence to stay in the Netherlands indefinitely. Deep down, she is Chilean, born and bred in Santiago. The climate there is similar to that in Holland. There are also four seasons yet temperatures seldom drop to below freezing point. In the summer, on the other hand, temperatures easily climb to 35 degrees. Mayenka also loves Holland and the Dutch people with whom she does her voluntary work. One of her sisters still lives in Chile. She visited Mayenka in September. Mayenka says that she is a member of a close-knit and friendly family. Her father had ten brothers and sisters. Her mother was an only child. She could rely on any member of the family at any time to help her. In the same way, her family and friends could rely on her. The house Mayenka's mother lives in was badly damaged during the recent earthquakes. At such times, Mayenka thinks of them all a great deal and tries to collect money in Holland to repair the house and replace the furniture.

Government opposition

Mayenka married after a very happy childhood. She had a son. In 1970 Salvador Allende was the head of government in Chile with his Unidad Popular party, a coalition formed by the socialist, communist and left-ish liberal parties. In September 1973, Pinochet led a coup which put a sudden end to Allende and his government.

Mayenka's idealism was quite different. She disagreed with Pinochet's government. For that reason she was captured and blindfolded. She was transported to a house where she was kept locked up. Nowadays that house, Villa Grimaldi, is a monument. They wanted to know the names and addresses of those opposing the government. After five days, she was released but was continually shadowed for the following year by the 'enemy' who wanted to find out whether she had any suspicious contacts. Her father provided her with a sort of bodyguard to protect her. Mayenka was well supported by many people around her. Despite the solidarity she experienced, being under constant threat led to a great deal of stress.

Flight to Rotterdam

In 1976, Mayenka fled the country with her husband and son, who was no longer able to play outside safely. Eventually they arrived in Holland, originally in IJmuiden and later settling in Rotterdam. When Pinochet was over-thrown, many Chileans returned to their own country. Mayenka stayed in Holland but her husband returned. Here, she noticed that she was well supported by the Dutch who sympathised with the oppressed people in Chile. She took part in campaigns against unjust imprisonment. In the beginning, she taught Spanish to Dutch people. Meetings were regularly held for Chilean citizens in exile. They all empathised with one another.

Female support

Mayenka met Nel van Mil in a Spanish speaking parish in Rotterdam. When she was asked to do some pastoral work in the parish, she willingly agreed. Mayenka is now one of the permanent volunteers offering support to Spanish speaking women in Rotterdam who are in difficulties. This may be because they have been the victim of trafficking in women. Sometimes they need help for other reasons. Mayenka is pleased to play a part in the content of Eucharist celebrations and takes part in discussion groups. In addition she visits prisoners. She is happy to do this pastoral work. Mayenka is also a trusted and active volunteer within the SRTV. She recently became grandmother to a healthy bouncing baby.

Gijs Lieffering, co-worker SRTV

Numbers of Male Victims of Human Trafficking on the Increase

The numbers of male victims of human trafficking in the Netherlands went up considerably last year. In 2009, 138 cases of trafficking in men were recorded, an increase of 30% on the previous year. These figures have been released in the Comensha annual report. Comensha is the Coordinating Centre regarding Human Trafficking.

In total more than nine hundred people were reported to Comensha as being victims of human trafficking. This was an increase of 10% on 2008. The increase is mainly due to better access to trafficking situations. According to Bas Visser of Comensha, more people and organisations are gaining more information. "They are learning what to look out for. More attention is being paid to the subject in general including the exploitation of men." Mr. Visser says that male victims are not only found in the sex industry. "They are also forced to work in catering organisations and in horticulture, for example as asparagus harvesters."

Last year, most human trafficking victims (240) in the Netherlands came from the Netherlands itself. Dutch girls are taken in by so-called 'lover boys'. Other countries on the list include Nigeria (101) and Romania (89). 118 of the victims were children, 18 were even younger than 15 years of age. People are exploited throughout the country.

Dutch Daily newspaper
Nederlands Dagblad, March11, 2010

A Story of Modern Slavery

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shahinian, in her latest report to the Human Rights Council, has called for comprehensive global action to eliminate the practice of bonded labour which she describes as a form of slavery. Quoting data from the International Labour Organisation, the Special Rapporteur says at a minimum, more than 12 million people are living as forced labourers. The causes are many: poverty, demand for cheap labour, unemployment, national or global crises.

"Time and realities may have changed," Shahinian says, "but the core essence of slavery persists in modern economies. In its modern forms, we find forced labour in agriculture, domestic servitude, the garment industry, the construction industry and prostitution and in the supply chains of mainstream companies."

Bonded labour occurs when a person offers their services in exchange for the repayment of a debt and, as part of the arrangement, loses control over work conditions and the length of the agreement. Usually there are no safeguards attached to the agreement that would normally be found with a regular loan such as reasonable conditions of repayment or agreed interest rates. Often the employer uses the debt to force individuals to work in exploitative conditions: bonded labourers commonly work very long hours, for very low wages and with no days off.

Technically, bonded labourers can end their state of servitude once the debt is repaid but as the report points out, this seldom happens. Debtors are often illiterate, lack basic maths skills and are easy prey for money lenders.

In building a profile of this form of forced labour the Special Rapporteur has found poverty first and foremost plays a crucial role: the vast majority of bonded labourers are chronically poor. Consequently, they often have little or no education, they are mostly from socially excluded groups, including indigenous people, minorities and migrants and they are more vulnerable because in many cases they have limited access to land where they might otherwise earn a living.

The Special Rapporteur is concerned that in the eyes of many, human trafficking and bonded labour are one and the same. Shahinian says seeing forced labour only through the prism of trafficking means that the magnitude of the problem is seriously underestimated. "Forced labour which may occur in the informal sector, in supply chains and export processing zones, within indigenous or minority populations and in rural areas – the overwhelming majority – is not addressed," she says.

International efforts to sign, ratify, enforce and monitor the slavery conventions 'pale in comparison' to those for trafficking, she says. Given the gravity of the human rights violations associated with bonded labour and the millions of people affected by such practices in every part of the world, it is important, the Special Rapporteur says that slavery be given its due prominence and attention.

Shahinian acknowledges that many countries have ratified the slavery conventions and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization. However, where laws on forced labour exist, their enforcement is limited and Shahinian says there are very few policies and programmes specifically directed at bonded labour. "Comprehensive action to eliminate this phenomenon," she says, "requires strong political will and the coordinated actions of many Governments to enforce international law and protect the rights of all."

Office of the
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
November 4, 2009

European Union Expansion has Changed the Sex Industry

The expansion of the European Union (EU) has had far reaching consequences for the sex industry. Women from especially Romania and Bulgaria have gone to western or southern European countries to work as prostitutes. A fifth of all prostitutes working in the EU is from one of these two countries.

These figures have been published in a report from the Amsterdam based organisation Tamrep. Tamrep describes itself as "The European Network for HIV/ST prevention and health promotion among Migrant Sex Workers". The percentages have changed because of the lack of travel restrictions in the EU, and the clamping down by the authorities on illegal immigrants from outside the EU.

The percentage of East European prostitutes working in northern, western and southern European countries has risen sharply. According to the report 60% of all prostitutes working in the Netherlands is foreign. The report states that the women don't stay in one country for a long period of time. They travel from country to country. Economic necessity is quoted as being the primary reason for this. Another reason is the force exercised by sex dealers and human traffickers.

According to Tamrep, the fact that so many East European women work elsewhere as prostitutes illustrates the great social and economic disparity in the EU. The report does not mention the role of criminal organisations in this phenomenon.

Marc Leijendekker
Dutch Newspaper NRC
January 28, 2010

Survivors of Human Trafficking – Breaking the Silence

The Human Rights Council, the principal UN intergovernmental body responsible for human rights, opened its 14th session in Geneva which runs from 31 May to 18 June.
They heard first-hand experiences of trafficking survivors and why their voices must be heard and their views considered.

Survivors speak
Thirty-year old Jana Kohut from Bosnia told the Human Rights Council how she was trafficked and sexually exploited for four months in neigh-bouring Slovenia.
The UN Human Rights Council heard of Jana's heartwrenching experience at the hands of traffickers, who forced her into prostitution. "I was repeatedly threatened in order to obey them, especially as I was constantly reminded how easy it would be for them to get my sister, to replace me and subject her to the same treatment."
Jana called for the creation of safe places and support for victims and survivors of trafficking. She said: "Involve those who wish to break the silence and nurture those who need to keep the silence." Jana is currently writing a film script of her experiences as a trafficked woman. She was one of five survivors who spoke at the Human Rights Council panel discussion on trafficking.
Kikka Cerpa, from Venezuela , told the harrowing story of how she was forced into prostitution in New York 18 years ago, by her former boyfriend. She told the Human Rights Council: "The other women and I were arrested over and over for prostitution. Never did the police or prosecutors ask us if we were trafficked. Never did they offer us help and protection."
Jana and Kikka, were speaking at the panel event titled: 'Giving Voice to the Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking.' Jana said her story and that of Kikka are replicated by thousands of other women and girls worldwide - but she brings trafficking for sexual exploitation closer home saying it could happen to us all. "How many more 13-year old girls, your daughter, my sister, their niece need to be forced into prostitution?" asked Jana. "How many more will be put into the number of some statistics, what number is high enough in this age of cruellest slavery?"

Foreign employment
Kumar Ramjali, a father of two left his home village in Nepal for Jordan after promises of a well paid job abroad. He said: "I was eager to go for the foreign employment."
Kumar told the Council that he nearly died as he together with 12 others were transported through two countries in a convey of vans to a military base in Iraq.
"We were held for eight days in that horrible place. We learned that two of the vans that were in our caravan and were carrying 12 Nepalese were missing. We later learned they had been stopped by insurgents and the 12 men were kidnapped and murdered, their executions broadcast on the internet."

Child soldier
Charlotte Awino from Uganda told the Council of how at the age of 14 years she was abducted from a boarding school and held captive for 8 years by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Her mother Angelina Atyam never stopped speaking out and working for her release and that of thousands abducted children in Uganda, despite threats by the LRA.

Contemporary slavery
Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kyung-Wha Kang opening the panel, described human trafficking as a 'contemporary form of slavery.'
"Despite the committed endeavours of many, persistent and growing economic disparities, conflict and discrimination, push those who are least able to protect themselves into dangerous situations from which they cannot escape," Kang said.
She said the 'market' of trafficking is shameful and the criminal trade needs a concerted effort to address.

Human Trafficking Experts
In a report to the Council Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, said: "Protection and proper identification of victims is the first and fundamental step."
She reiterated that "People who are trafficked must be treated as victims and not as criminals," and said "victims of trafficking need protection and assistance as well as access to justice".
Separately, the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, addressing an OHCHR two-day seminar for experts on the human rights approach to anti-trafficking, said it violates the most fundamental of our human rights: "The right to life, to equality, dignity and security; the right to health; the right to freedom of movement, freedom from violence and abuse; and the right to be recognized as a person before the law."
"Preventing trafficking requires attention to vulnerabilities created through a failure to protect rights," Pillay said.

www.ohchr.org

The Human Rights office urges States to utilize the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking , developed by the Office in 2002, in their efforts to prevent trafficking and protect victims.

Let's Kick Out Human Trafficking
2010 Should be About The Game

This became our slogan as SARWATIP (Southern African Religious Women Against Trafficking in Persons) hosted a workshop from 15 to 19 February 2010 to plan a campaign of action ahead of the Football World Cup.

Participants included Religious women from 19 different congregations representing 11 countries on four continents (South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Nigeria, Brazil, Thailand, Italy and Ireland).
The aim of the workshop was to plan a campaign that could be carried out in each country in preparation for, during and after the 2010 Football World Cup which will be held in SA from June 11 to July11.
At the end of the workshop participants committed themselves to implementing the plans developed: to visit schools and parishes, to go to embassies and airports; to raise awareness of trafficking in persons at the time of the Game and beyond. Posters for teaching and training are being developed locally/nationally and will be distributed.

Letters with different target groups in mind were drafted giving a brief explanation of forms of trafficking in persons and appealing to each in different ways…

– *Religious Leaders, Bishops, Superiors*: asking their support in the campaign so as to reach as many people as possible – especially in pastoral letters of support and homilies on the subject as well as considering releasing members to promote the campaign in their diocese or congregation.
– *Possible victims*: urging them to be careful '…if you receive job offers that are too good to be true. You may end up lured and deceived into cheap labour (in sweatshops, as domestic workers, in restaurants), sexual exploitation and drug dealing which are some of the many faces of trafficking in person.'

  And further encouraging them to take note of the following:
  - Stay with your group and look out for one another;
  - Let your parents or someone know where and with whom you are going and possible contact details;
  - If you find yourself in any difficulty, speak only to recognized officials;
  - Check out job offers before you accept;
  - Do not leave your drinks or any food open and unattended;
  - Memorise the toll free helpline number in South Africa 0800 555 999
– *Unwitting agents*: '…we urge you to be careful if you are asked to give a lift or accommodation to a person who could have been lured and deceived into cheap labour, sexual exploitation and drug dealing which are some of the many faces of trafficking in person. We remind you that trafficking in persons is an internationally recognized crime and you can be convicted for it even if you are involved unwittingly.'
– *Football fans*: urging them to be careful '…if you receive offers of sexual services and drugs which may be provided by victims of trafficking.' Reminding them also that trafficking is a criminal offence and ending with '…we wish your team success and that all who attend this Football World Cup may have a good experience. We hope that human rights and the dignity of all persons are upheld and respected. If you feel threatened or suspect an incident of trafficking in persons, please contact the helpline…'

The letters mention that trafficking in persons is an internationally recognized crime. However, while South Africa has many laws under which traffickers could be held we are only too aware of the lack of law enforcement in this country. The international visitors at the workshop were appalled to hear how lax the authorities are to follow up on criminals so why should it be different in the case of persons who have been trafficked? And so we keep up the work of making more people aware of the dangers of trafficking in persons aware of the uphill battle…

Ms. L. Goemans, March 14, 2010,
Grail member in Grail Newsletter

The SRTV motto:

'It's not only the Dreams we share
that are important,
but especially the work we do together.'

After reading this Newsletter,
don't throw it away.
Please pass it through to someone else.

SRTV mail:
srtv@srtv.info

SRTV website:
www.srtv.info

Worldwide Network of Religious against Trafficking in Women

We are regularly able to keep you up to date with the many activities in various countries where we have our own contacts. This time we want to inform you about those in Indonesia and Malawi.

Indonesia

Sister Antonie Ardatin has been telling the sisters in Indonesia about trafficking in women for several years now. Sister Antonie is an Indonesian member of the general committee of the Dutch congregation of 'The Daughters of Mary and Joseph' in Den Bosch.

Sister Antonie has organised at least 10 seminars on several islands in her home country Indonesia in the past two years on the problems connected to trafficking in women. Sister Antonie invited sisters from various other congregations who had shown an interest in the subject of trafficking in women to attend these seminars so that they could organise something along the same lines in their own areas.

Various seminars

Initially one-day seminars were organised in several places in Indonesia. They were attended by large groups of young sisters. Sister Antonie made sure that the local police force and the IOM (the International Organisation for Migration) were also involved. Those sisters who appeared to be interested in campaigning against trafficking in their own areas were then invited to seminars lasting several days. In that way, the reasons for and the consequences of trafficking in women were studied in more detail. In addition, local solutions were found. In this way three large seminars were organized, each of which was attended by 30 sisters. They were held in the east of Indonesia (Surabaya), in the central area (Purwonkerto) and in the west (Lampung).

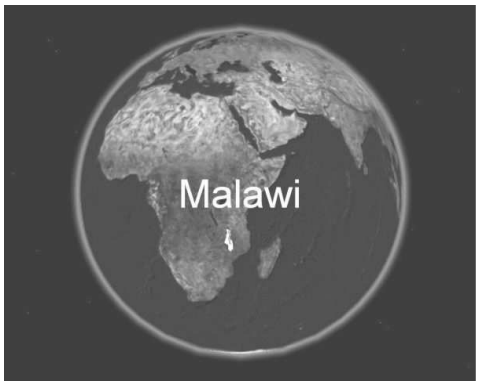
Remarkable decision

Sister Antonie visited the SRTV last month and told us about the meetings and the ever-growing network in Indonesia. The sisters now often take care of victims who return from terrible 'work experience' in the Middle East or in Malaysia.

The sisters operating the Indonesian Network have made a remarkable decision. They have decided not to build shelters, which would be very expensive and where staff would always have to be present. Victims often need medical treatment from more than one doctor and housing would not always be available in a safe place. Instead, the sisters have decided to take care of these victims in their own accommodation and community. Sister Antonie said: "There is always room for one or two girls to stay with a group of sisters. The girls then have someone to talk to and are housed in safe places. The money necessary to build a new refuge no longer has to be found." Looking after the victims in this way is similar to what the Dutch sisters did in the 1980s and what the Italian sisters do nowadays. It is good to know that the sisters in Indonesia are really concerned about these young girls in their country. We shall keep you informed of the network activities in Indonesia.

Malawi

A few years ago, you received news of the work in Malawi being done by the Dutch Sister Raymunda Van Velzen, a member of the Congregation of Our Lady of Amersfoort.



Sister Raymunda has been back in The Netherlands for several years now but kept in touch with the network she had set up for information and prevention in Malawi, both by post and by mail. However, she heard little news in 2008 and none at all in 2009. Last September, Sister Raymunda returned to Malawi on behalf of her congregation for a short visit. The SRTV asked her to stay a little longer in order to find out how her network was getting on. This enterprising lady willingly agreed. She visited several people and places, travelling as cheaply as possible. She wanted to save money to be able to give it to the group.

The network is still alive and kicking!

The women and women's organisations whom Sister Raymunda had inspired ten years earlier were still active. They were still providing information in their own area just as they had previously been doing. However, the funding they needed annually for their main meeting somewhere in the middle of that great country had run out. That explained why nothing more had been heard from them. Their work continued but they had not been able to afford to meet, to speak to each other or to deliberate on what had to be done. They did manage to warn people in their own neighbourhood of the traps and promises which are given. "Don't believe the stories they tell you. You have to repay them with your body." They tell young girls and boys everywhere not to believe the stories about the we-

alth in Europe which would be available to them. They advise them as to what questions they should ask if they are invited to travel to Europe to find work. They are told how to check whether the offer is genuine or not.

Sister Raymunda has many contacts in Malawi and she said that in several villages she had heard about small loans which were being made available to women, who would not be required to repay the loan. All that would be sorted out later. They could go to South Africa in 2010 to repay their debt. Was it just a coincidence that the world football event would be taking place there then? The seeds that Sister Raymunda planted in Malawi have taken root and grown. The network is thriving and they are making do with what they have. The SRTV is now trying to assist Sister Raymunda in finding some way of helping the Malawian network.

Ivonne van de Kar, coordinator SRTV

In the News

Football Helps against Human Trafficking in India

It is difficult to imagine that these self-assured girls in tracksuits on the football pitch were playing barefoot with a ball of rags a year ago. Sita (14) forcefully passes the ball to Puspa (13) while teammates loudly call out each other's names. "It is great to see how the self-confidence of these girls has grow"', says Willem Grimminck. Football can make them realise that they are talented. Besides that, the group offers them a platform to talk about their daily problems.
Last year Grimminck and his American colleague Franz Gastler started a football team for young people in the countryside with the idea of organising the youth. Hardly any boys turned up, but enough girls to form four teams. "A local coach summed it up by saying that boys can play whenever they want but for girls this was a unique opportunity", says Grimminck.

First time
This week, the girls are in a football camp in Jamshedpur, 150 kilometres south of the regional capital Jharkhand Ranchi. Here they receive professional training from the Indian multinational Tata training school, the Tata football agency (TFA). For all of them, this is the first time that they have left the vicinity of their village, the first time that they are not sleeping at home and the first time that they are playing football on a grass pitch.

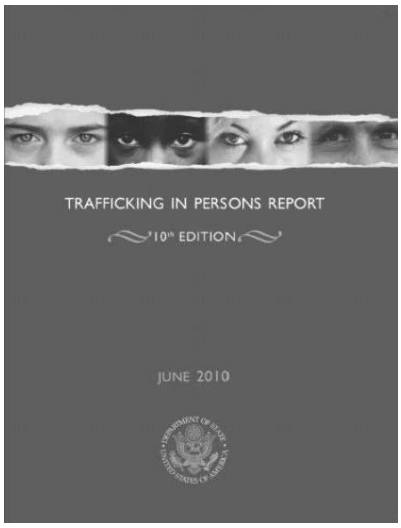
Not all the young girls in the village have the possibility to play football. Sita's fifteen-year-old sister Geeta, for example, got married this year according to Gastler. Marriage partners are being sought for other girls in the village. According to Gastler, though, the club has contributed to a critical view on underage girls getting married. Many girls don't want to get married yet and in the club they can talk about this. If Geeta's parents decide to marry off her other four sisters, the whole club will protest.
Gastler sees this as an achievement of the football project. "If women on average get married at a later age, then this is an indication of development and more education – this fact is generally accepted by development/aid workers worldwide. According to a recent UNICEF report, nearly 50% of Indian girls are underage when they get married." This success of Grimminck and Gastler hasn't only been achieved through football. "It is always important to combine sport with another form of development work", says Grimminck.

Human trafficking
Grimminck himself combines the football project with his work for ATEC, an organisation against human trafficking. "Football itself can't combat this problem but it goes a long way", says Grimminck.
Social disparity is one of the major causes of women trafficking. A woman is of little value in rural Jharkand. Football is a way to enable girls to discuss this disparity. It is estimated that every year 30,000 girls fall into the hands of human traffickers in Jharkand. They are subsequently sold to factories and brothels throughout the country. Apart from a football club, Gastler has also founded the organisation Yuwa, which offers children homework help. "We encourage all the girls who play football to go to school. This is something that their parents are not familiar with", says Gastler. "If they work hard and do their best, then we can help them enrol in a better school."
The girls themselves use a notebook to keep account of the team mates who go to school. The girls are not compelled by the club to go to school but a lot of girls go to school more often because their team mates go as well. After their stay at the TFA, Grimminck and Gastler will travel through the rest of India, Nepal and Pakistan on a motor bike. On their way they want to organise football matches for the youth. "We want to show what football can mean. We would like it to be a more common aspect of development work", says Grimminck.

Aletta André,
Dutch Newspaper 'De Pers', December 2, 2009

USA Trafficking in Persons Report 2010

The 2010 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, compiled by the U.S. Department of State, marks the 10th anniversary of progress and challenge in the fight against modern slavery. In 2000, the United States enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), and the United Nations adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol.



The Palermo Protocol

The UN-Palermo Protocol focused the global community's attention on the scourge of human trafficking and the need for nations to work together to combat it. For the first time, there was a global consensus that all acts of trafficking in persons should be criminalized, including trafficking for forced labor, slavery, and slavery-like practices. The Protocol held that governmental responses should incorporate the '3P' paradigm: Prevention, Criminal Prosecution and Victim Protection.

A Growing and Committed but Young Movement

Over 10 years, governments worldwide have made appreciable progress in understanding some basic realities about human trafficking:

- People are in situations of modern slavery in most countries,
- Trafficking is a fluid phenomenon responding to market demands, vulnerabilities in laws, weak penalties, and economic instability,
- Trafficking can occur without movement across borders.

But 10 years of focused effort to combat trafficking only represents the infancy of this modern movement. Many countries are still learning about human trafficking and the best responses to it. It is not enough to prosecute traffickers if governments do not provide assistance to the survivors and work to ensure that no one else is victimized. No country has yet attained a truly comprehensive response to this massive, ever increasing, ever changing crime.

The Victims

More people are trafficked for forced labor than for commercial sex. The crime is less about duping and kidnapping people than it is about coercion of people who entered a form of service voluntarily or migrated willingly. Men comprise a significant number of trafficking victims. Traffickers often use sexual violence as a weapon against women to keep them in compelled service, whether in a field, a factory, a brothel, a home, or a war zone.

Key Numbers from the 2010 TIP Report

- 12.3 million adults and children in forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world,
- 56 percent of these victims are women and girls,
- $32 billion annual trade for the traffickers,
- 49,105 victims identified worldwide, a 59 percent increase over the reporting year 2008,
- Prevalence of trafficking victims in the world: 1.8 per 1,000 inhabitants (in Asia and the Pacific: 3 per 1,000),
- 4,166 successful trafficking prosecutions in 2009, a 40 percent increase over 2008,
- Countries that have yet to convict a trafficker under laws in compliance with the Palermo Protocol: 62 Countries without laws, policies, or regulations to prevent victims' deportation: 104,
- 23 countries received upgraded rankings in the 2010 TIP Report; 19 countries received downgraded rankings,
- Two countries, the United States and Kiribati, are ranked for the first time in the 2010 TIP Report.

United States Department of State, Jun 14, 2010
http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm

Human Trafficking Pact signed in Dubai

The agreement is in line with joint efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking, enhance international cooperation against such crimes and consolidate relevant laws.

DUBAI: The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) and the Dubai Judicial Institute (DJI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to coordinate more closely in the fight against human trafficking.

Dr Anwar Mohammad Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Federal National Council Affairs, and Head of the NCCHT, signed the agreement on behalf of the committee, while Dr Jamal Al Sumaiti, Director General of the Dubai Judicial Institute, acted as the institute's signatory. The agreement is in line with joint efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking, enhance international cooperation against such crimes and consolidate relevant laws.

www.golf-news.com, May 5, 2010

Caritas Protects Migrant Domestic Worker Rights

Caritas is launching a campaign to urge employers and governments to protect migrants who work in people's homes as maids, nannies and carers from exploitation.
These workers are often women. They risk long working hours, no social security protection, poor wages and violence. Abuses are difficult to detect as they occur in people's homes.
Employment in private households accounts for about one-third of all female employment in Asia, for example, according to the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN).

The campaign has been launched ahead of the International Labour Organization's annual conference in June, when a draft convention to protect domestic workers will be examined.

"An international convention would underline that domestic work is work, thus people performing this work have rights like other workers," said Martina Liebsch, Director of Policy at Caritas Internationalis. "Maids, nannies and carers help us to educate our children, to take care of the elderly or to go to work. They need our respect and recognition."

The International Labour Organziation is the UN body responsible for international employment standards. The ILO will consider a draft convention to protect the rights of domestic workers in June 2010. Caritas is asking for provisions that protect migrant domestic workers.

Caritas would like to see:
- Employers treating their maids, au pairs and carers with respect,
- Residence permits not tied to one employer,
- Recognised employment agencies regulating domestic work,
- An international convention protecting domestic workers.

Caritas Press release, April 20, 2010

Council of Europe monitors the Fight against Trafficking

The Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) has launched the monitoring procedure to assess how the first ten states that ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings are applying it to prevent trafficking, protect the victims and prosecute the traffickers.

GRETA, an independent body specifically created by the Council of Europe for monitoring states' compliance with the convention, will prepare its first monitoring reports on Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland said "Trafficking in human beings is the slavery of modern age. It remains as inhuman and as unacceptable as in the old age. The launch of the Council of Europe monitoring work on combating trafficking is a major and most wanted step for the protection of human rights in Europe. We must act swiftly and with determination. States that have not yet ratified the convention should do it without delay."

GRETA's monitoring work started by addressing a questionnaire to the governments of the ten countries to gather information on measures taken to implement the convention. States must reply at the latest by September 1,2010. GRETA will carry out the first country visits in the second half of the year. Its first monitoring reports will be prepared towards the end of this year and published in early 2011.
In 2011, GRETA will start monitoring France, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Malta, Portugal, Latvia, Armenia, Montenegro, Poland and the United Kingdom. In 2012, it will be the turn of Spain, Luxembourg, Serbia, Belgium, 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' and Slovenia.

The convention, which entered into force on February 1, 2008, is the first European treaty in the field of action against trafficking in human beings, and the only international treaty focusing on the human rights of its victims. So far, 26 Council of Europe member states have ratified it. Another 17 states have signed it, but not yet ratified it. The convention is also open for signature by states that are not Council of Europe members, as well as by the European Union.

The monitoring mechanism of the convention consists of two bodies: the GRETA, composed of independent experts, and the Committee of the Parties, composed of the representatives of the parties to the convention.

COE, Strasbourg, March 18, 2010

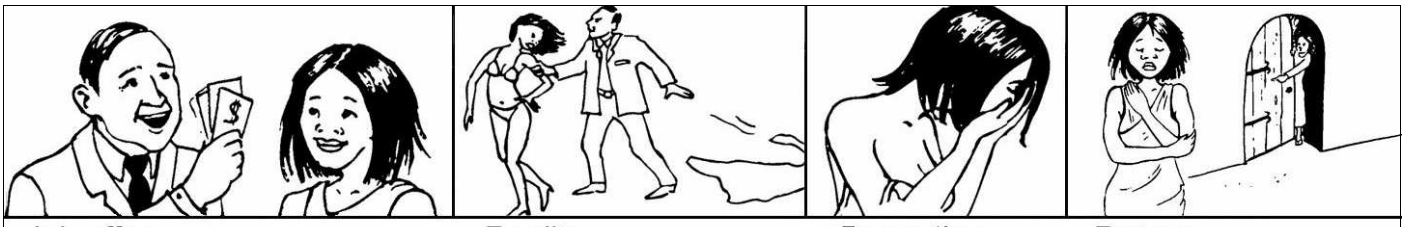
Choosing a Career

I don't have any exact figures, but the percentage of the world's population earning a living from prostitution must be enormous. I mean the ordinary workers on the front line. The people working day in and day out in the profession. The people on the wrong side of the fence. The figures become even larger if you include the number of people involved in running the profession who feather their own nest. Then you are talking about all the small time bosses, middlemen and go-betweens. And above them you have the mafia who combine the prostitution business with the drugs trade. The amount of money earned on this side of the fence is astronomical. We are not talking about paltry amounts here, but everything your heart desires and more. There is never enough.

Don't be so hysterical, they say and continue to write defending articles. Forget about the upper echelons, the people in seedy faraway places who will go over dead bodies in their lust for power.
But take a look here – here, girls and women make a free choice to enter the profession. They work independently or work under the protection of a pimp. And there are enough decent pimps who only have the best in mind for their girls. Just like there are impeccable sex clubs with transparent bookkeeping who receive excellent assessment results from the Department of Labour Inspection. Well paid jobs with plenty of future opportunities, I suppose. But strangely enough, I never hear any mention of them among the stressed pupils who are sitting their exam in the last year of primary school. They are also never mentioned during the various open days organised by secondary schools looking for a new influx of students. There are plenty of advertisements from various schools offering all types of choices. But what you never see is the following: "We offer reliable schooling opportunities to become a prostitute". Our vocational teachers are fully trained to make you the perfect pimp. Or: Plan your career in the sex industry…

The Augustine Sisters lived for years in the red light area of Amsterdam. There, without being judgemental, they offered the women help in the form of a listening ear, soup, coffee or moral support. The closing of the convent was mentioned on the news. One of the sisters told the reporter about a meeting she had on the street with a prostitute. "Look Sister, and now we go our separate ways. You carry on with your work and I carry on with my work." The Sister looked into the camera and said: "that type of profession is not really my cup of tea."

Mrs. Coks van Eysden
Columnist SRTV



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