

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING FACT SHEET

## Definition:

The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking includes forcing people into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation. Children can also be victims, trafficked often for prostitution, illegal adoptions, trafficking for early marriage or recruitment as beggars or sporting contestants.

## Why it Happens:

Globalization has created a widening gap in wealth between countries, and made many people “victims of the excesses of a global economic system that rewards wealth and exploits the poor.” Such pressure has severely impacted women seeking a way to make a living, and “has had a direct impact on the movement of workers, the degradation of work and income distribution, and increased the conditions for human trafficking. “International Human Sexual Trafficking is inextricably linked to the feminization of poverty. 70 percent of the world’s poor are women. Most poor women live in developing countries, and tolerate terrible conditions because, economically or culturally, there are limited options available to them.”

## Estimated Scale:

Human trafficking is the second largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world. The total annual revenue for trafficking in persons is estimated to be between \$5 billion and \$9 billion, and impacts an estimated 800,000 people around the world. The United States is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women. An estimated 20,000 victims, some estimates are as high as 50,000, are trafficked into the U.S. each year. “Different sources estimate as high as \$32 billion, increasingly at the hands of organized crime due to the high profits and the fewer risks compared to arms or drug trafficking, thus making human trafficking the fastest-growing criminal industry in the world at this time.”<sup>1</sup>

## Policy:

The problem of trafficking in women has been addressed at the international, national, and some state levels. In 2000 President Bill Clinton signed and the Senate ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The US Department of State annually publishes a Trafficking in Persons Report on the efforts of governments to combat trafficking and issues a report to Congress as required under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The report categorizes countries as to whether they fully comply with the Acts minimum standards to prohibit and punish those involved in trafficking. To read the report visit [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

## Who is Being Trafficked:

80 percent of people trafficked are women and girls  
and half are minors under the age of 13.<sup>2</sup>

## Where Can Victims of Trafficking Be Found:

Victims of trafficking can be found in all types of establishments and locations, in rural, suburban and urban settings, on streets, in houses, in trailers and on farms.

Agriculture, landscaping workers  
Street panhandling / peddling  
Day labor sites  
Door-to-door sales  
Commercial sex industry—street prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors, escort services, phone chat lines, residential brothels

Factories (garment, meat-packing, industrial welding)  
Hotels and homes (housekeepers, nannies or servile marriages)  
Internet sites (Craigslist and others)  
Restaurants, bars, and other service industries (nail or hair salons)



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## What Forms of Trafficking Are Most Common?<sup>3</sup>

<b>Bonded Labor/Debt Bondage:</b> In many cases, poverty induces people to accept loans which they promise to pay off with their labor. The “lender,” however, has no intention of ever allowing the loan to be paid in full.	<b>Contract “Slavery”:</b> This type of enslavement can also be a form of bonded labor. In it, people are offered employment but the contract they sign is just a way of entrapping them into modern day slavery.
<b>Forced Labor:</b> In the United States, forced labor—often prostitution, domestic service, agriculture, factory, restaurant, or hotel work—is a fact of life for tens of thousands of people. Foreigners are trafficked into this country from at least thirty-five countries, but most often from China, Mexico and Vietnam.	<b>Sexual Trafficking/Sex Tourism:</b> A 2005 UNICEF report estimated that “1.2 million children are sold into ‘sexual slavery’ every year and 2 million children—mainly girls, but also a significant number of boys—are believed to be part of the multi-billion dollar commercial sex trade.” Many women, and some men as well, are also victims of sex trafficking.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO



**On December 10, 2008 the House of Representatives and Senate passed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (H.R. 7311), which was signed into law by the President on December 23, 2008.** The bill strengthens the fight against trafficking by increasing penalties and providing more services for victims in the U.S. and abroad. The law also enforces extraterritorial laws relative to “sex tourism.” The bill also creates a model state law and requires new statistics to be submitted by each state and reported to and posted by the Department of Justice.

**Contact President-elect Barack Obama and Secretary of State-Designee Hillary Clinton and urge them to appoint a new head to the trafficking office who will be a strong international leader in combating trafficking.** You can e-mail President-elect Obama by visiting [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov) and click on share your vision under “American Moment.” To contact Secretary of State-Designee Hillary Clinton call her Senate office at (202) 224-4451 or visit her website at <http://clinton.senate.gov/contact/> to send her an e-mail.

**Contact your members of Congress to support the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA).** To help protect women and girls at risk of rape and assault, Congress must pass the International Violence Against Women Act. This landmark bill, to be re-introduced in the new session of Congress, would make efforts to address sexual violence a key priority in U.S. foreign assistance programs.

**In 2008, 30 states had laws criminalizing trafficking. Contact your state governor and legislators to urge anti-trafficking legislation and the creation of a statewide taskforce to coordinate state and local services for trafficking victims and legal enforcement against traffickers.**

**To ensure the protection of women and girls, organize with others to investigate how your community responds to human trafficking incidents.** How do your local law enforcement officers assist women and girls who are victims of trafficking? Are there safe houses, legal or translation services, medical or counseling services to assist victims of trafficking in your community? Visit your local police department or contact your local elected officials. Tell us what you learn by e-mailing [umwanet@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:umwanet@gbgm-umc.org)

### “Victims don’t usually identify themselves”

If you believe someone is being trafficked or sexually exploited call the Nineline for immediate help at 1-800-999-9999 or the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

**The Women’s Division as a member of the National Council of Churches’ Justice for Women Working Group affirms the National Council of Churches (NCC) Resolution on Human Trafficking; and will work to implement educational programs and policy actions related to this issue. To read the NCC Resolution on Human Trafficking visit <http://www.nccusa.org/NCCpolicies/humantrafficking.htm>**

**Read *The Book of Resolutions 2004* #285 pg. 283 Abolition of Sex Trafficking.**

<sup>1</sup> *The Iowa Review*, The University of Iowa Center for Human Rights, Volume 36, Number 1, Spring 2006.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2008.

<sup>3</sup> *Modern-Day Slavery*, Handout from Church of the Brethren Study and Action Guide.