ILO Report on Forced Labor


The report estimates that at least 12.3 million people are victims of forced labor worldwide. Of these, 9.8 million are exploited by private agents, including more than 2.4 million in forced labor as a result of human trafficking.

The report finds that most trafficked people are in the Asia and Pacific region. It also states that 32% of trafficked people are used for forced economic exploitation and 43% for forced commercial sexual exploitation. The remainder are trafficked for a mixture of the above.

The ILO estimates that the profits derived each year from trafficked people are over US $31 billion.

To download the full report, go to: http://ilo.org/dyn/declaris/DECLARATIONWEB.GLOBALREPORTSLIST?var_language=EN

Slave Labor in Brazil Fueled by Poverty

Below is a translation of an interview that the magazine Jornal Sem Terra conducted with Ricardo Rezende Figueira, who worked for 20 years in the state of Para as a member of the Catholic Church’s Land Commission. He holds a doctorate in Anthropology from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

Jornal Sem Terra: Statistics show that slave labor is increasing here in Brazil. What are the reasons that, in this the 21st century, slavery continues to be a reality in this country?

Ricardo Rezende Figueira: Debt slavery is a reality not only here in Brazil, but in various other countries as well, including some First World (sic) countries. One of the reasons that explains this type of slavery is that on the one hand, you have extreme wealth, and on the other, extreme poverty. Where there are people without work, without economic conditions to lead a dignified life, there are also other people who can easily lure these others with false promises of employment and salaries. Misery, or the absence of the alternative to stay where one was born, where one has family ties and friendships, forces people to emigrate. And the slave is always someone who has emigrated, who is far from his/her land where s/he has nets of protection. In these situations of great vulnerability, they easily become victims. Another reason for the existence of slavery is impunity or the absence of harsh measures, which would deter the practice of this crime. If, for example, there were a law that stated that those who held slaves would automatically lose their land, then they would be afraid to engage in this practice. There has been such a proposal tied up in Congress for years now, which would make this a constitutional amendment. This would be an important instrument for eradicating slavery in Brazil.

JST: Slave labor is a recurring practice in rural areas of the country. But how is the situation in urban areas?

RRF: Yes, it is a recurring problem in rural areas and we have information about it. The Catholic Church’s Land Commission does an excellent job of monitoring the situation and Brazil cont. pg. 2
Internet to Help Catch Human Traffickers

The WorldWideWeb has become the latest frontier in the fight to combat human trafficking. Asian anti-trafficking campaigners are counting on the launch of a new web portal to connect agencies trying to protect and support victims, and prosecute traffickers. In China alone 9,000 women and children were kidnapped last year. www.TIPinAsia.info explains trafficking laws in different Asian countries. The multilingual site, currently in Thai, Khmer and English, lists a directory of people working in the field in different parts of Asia, and describes what it is like to be caught up in trafficking.

It highlights the case of men taken onto fishing boats in Thailand who live in appalling conditions, and receive no pay. They live under threat of execution - anyone who complains risks being shot, or thrown overboard. They work 24 hours a day and rarely come ashore.

While young women forced into prostitution are often the focus for anti-trafficking campaigners, the crime applies to any use of labor where people are coerced by threats or the use of force.

James Klein from the Asia Foundation, which set up the website, said it is designed to raise awareness of trafficking and allow for information to be shared about the problem. “Ten years ago, this wouldn’t have been the answer. But now, throughout Asia, the Internet is big - even in countries like Cambodia. Therefore, if you’re really trying to communicate across borders, the easiest and the least expensive way for this to happen is over the Internet,” he said. The site harnesses the web’s network power to fight trafficking.

Dr. Klein said there were plans to split the site into public and private domains. In this way, fieldworkers could share sensitive information over the web, without it falling into the hands of traffickers. For example, he said, “a raid might happen here in Bangkok, and a group of Cambodian girls found. Those names could be transferred to the appropriate people, whether they be officials or non-government agencies in Cambodia, and plans made to transport them back, and return them to the general population.” In many cases, however, it is clear that officials become complicit in trafficking. Dr. Klein said the website could help to combat that with its directory, which lists tested and trusted officials in countries, which have a record of helping victims.

Finally, officials in Cambodia and Thailand are starting to recognize victims of trafficking as such, rather than as illegal migrants, the Asia Foundation reports. According to Dr. Klein, “the number one issue remains changing attitudes of people, so they know what trafficking is, and apply procedures accordingly.” The hope is that Tipinasia.info might encourage more people with power to do that.

(Excerpted from an article by Kylie Morris BBC News, Bangkok)
Advocacy

‘The Miami Declaration on Human Trafficking’

The Preamble of the Miami Declaration states: “Today, slavery is illegal in nearly every country on the face of this planet. Yet, 600,000 to 2,000,000 people are trafficked across international borders annually and millions more are trafficked within borders. An estimated 27 million people toil under conditions of personal servitude around the world. Human trafficking has become the third largest source of profits for organized crime, generating billions of dollars each year.

In order to combat this egregious and growing threat to human dignity, the government leaders, scholars, expert practitioners and students present at the symposium on human trafficking held on the campus of St. Thomas University Law School on February 10, 2005, hosted by the Law School’s Graduate Program in Intercultural Human Rights and its Intercultural Human Rights Law Review, shared their expertise, engaged in thorough problem- and policy-oriented discussion and formulated the following set of consensus principles to recommend to decision-makers and practitioners around the world.”

The document contains 42 principles covering the following issues: international legal policies; legal sanctions and enforcement strategies; immigration policies; and protection/reintegration of victims of trafficking.

In March 2005 Roza Pati, Executive Director of the Graduate Program in Intercultural Human Rights at St. Thomas University School of Law, presented the Declaration to representatives of 55 nation states and numerous international agencies during a conference hosted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). She said the Declaration was well-received. She stated, “Our hope is that this Declaration will be widely distributed, studied and used as a basis of collaborative action in helping victims and stopping human rights abuses globally.”

Experts involved in drafting the Declaration included representatives from OSCE, from government agencies (U.S. State Department, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Anti-Trafficking Program; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-ICE; Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and US attorneys based in Florida); non-governmental organizations (England’s ‘Free the Slaves’; the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services’ Office of Refugee Programs, and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women CATW); academic experts in law, international affairs and human rights from St. Thomas University, Florida State University, Johns Hopkins, and many others.

U.S. Bishops Back Major Immigration Reform Proposal

Bishop Gerald R. Barnes, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), expressed support in a press release for the “The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005,” (S. 1033, HR. 2330) introduced in Congress in May by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate and by Representatives Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) in the House.

“This Act represents a comprehensive and bipartisan approach to reforming our U.S. immigration system. This legislation seeks to repair the current system, which is broken and needs reform,” said Bishop Barnes.

It creates legal avenues for migrant workers to enter the United States in a safe and orderly manner. It provides an opportunity for immigrants in the United States to work toward permanent residency. It also provides additional visas for families to be reunited through the family preference system,” Bishop Barnes explained.

“For these reasons, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration supports the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005,” the Bishop said. “This legislative proposal best reflects principles for immigration reform set forth by the United States bishops.”

Bishop Barnes expressed a desire to work with the sponsors of the legislation and others to include additional important provisions to the measure. These would include additional labor protections in the essential worker program for both U.S. and foreign
Veteran filmmaker Gayla Jamison set out to do a documentary about human trafficking and modern-day slavery. She was frustrated until she found Anna Rodriguez.

“I’ve talked to so many people in so many parts of the country,” said Jamison. “Anna was the only one who ‘got it’ — got what I was trying to do. The personal stories of the victims move an audience and prepare them to take in the bigger picture. To inform people, you must first touch their hearts. The intellect will follow.”

Rodriguez knows the victims’ stories. After they are freed from slavery, their needs — for housing, medical care, counseling, visas, jobs — are overwhelming. Rodriguez, who lives in Naples, FL, works with law enforcement, prosecutors and immigration.

Jamison, who owns Lightfoot Films (Atlanta, GA), and Larry Rich, executive producer of videos for Maryknoll, the New York-based Catholic mission movement, were filming in Lee County in June 2005.

They and their crew are explaining trafficking through the ordeal of an enslaved Guatemalan girl forced to cook and clean in the Cape Coral house of a Guatemalan yard worker, Fernando Pascual, as well as have sex with him.

Pascual, 21, bought the girl in Guatemala when she was 11 for $260 from her mother, raped her repeatedly and brought her to the Cape, where his relatives helped keep her enslaved, according to law enforcement officials. The girl, now a 14-year-old mother, lives with her child in a foster home.

So far, Jamison has done on-camera interviews with Rodriguez, members of the Lee County FL Sheriff’s Office Human Trafficking Team, a Cape Coral neighbor who helped the Guatemalan girl escape her captors, the girl’s foster guardian and a former “coyote,” a person who smuggles people across the Mexican border. They’ve also filmed a dramatization of the girl’s story.

They planned to interview Doug Molloy, the chief assistant U.S. attorney in Fort Myers, who is prosecuting the case against the Pascual family. Later this summer, they’ll interview officials in Guatemala before finishing the film by the end of this year. It is scheduled to air on the Hallmark Channel, and perhaps public television, early in 2006.

“What marks the work we’ve done is to go beyond the shock value to why is this happening and ask is there something we can do about it,” said Rich, a former lay missionary in Peru who focused on human rights.

Jamison, who describes herself as a “Latinophile,” has written and produced more than 20 documentaries about Latin American life; this is her fourth on Guatemala. Many have been done with Maryknoll, Rich and the crew she’s using on this film. “With Maryknoll,” Jamison said, “I’ve found this spiritual home. We are a vehicle for people who don’t have a voice.”

(Excerpted from an article by Gail Palmer in news-press.com June 24, 2005)

Help Protect Farm Workers

While many of us enjoy summer family picnics the majority of the men, women and children, who pick the fruits and vegetables we pile on our hamburgers and salads, continue to live in the shadows of fear.

Undocumented farm workers daily face fear and intimidation because many employers use the threat of deportation to ensure their silence and compliance with abuse. They do some of the hardest labor in the U.S. with hopes of earning their independence from fear some day.

There is no doubt immigration is a part of our past and part of our future. However, our current immigration system is broken and it desperately needs to be fixed. Send an email today to your congressional representative urging support for AgJobs. AgJobs (S. 359 and H.R. 884) would allow undocumented farm workers, who are here now, to earn the legal right to permanently stay in this country by continuing to work in agriculture. With broad bipartisan support, it is a comprehensive bill negotiated by the United Farm Workers and the agricultural industry. It is a viable bi-partisan immigration reform solution for the agricultural industry. Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), AgJobs’ lead sponsor in the Senate, believes AgJobs will come up for a vote again this year.
Heat Death

When Kern County, CA table grape picker Asuncion Valdivia, 53, fell victim to 100-plus degree weather in July 2004, thousands of activists took on-line action to try to prevent more heat deaths.

Yet on July 13, 2005 — less than a year after Asuncion’s death — another farm worker, Salud Zamudio Rodriguez, 42, succumbed to more than 105-degree heat while laboring in a bell pepper field outside Arvin, CA. Though co-workers attempted to hydrate and cool him when he began to shake and wave his arms frantically, the sweltering heat proved too intense.

On July 31st, 24-year old Constantino Cruz died in a CA hospital 10 days after he collapsed from the heat during a speed-up in a tomato field near Shafter, Calif. He was the fifth farm worker whose death has been related to the heat since July 28, 2004. Four of these deaths occurred during a three-week period in July alone!

Citizens must create pressure in state government to prevent further needless tragedies. On July 18 Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers (UFW), during a news conference urged CA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to issue an emergency regulation aimed at preventing more heat-related fatalities. The UFW is calling on CA lawmakers to pass AB 805 (Assemblymember Judy Chu D-Monterey Park) requiring basic steps by growers to prevent and respond to heat illness. A state regulation on heat illness was first proposed in 1990, but nothing has been done for 15 years.

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Among the requirements of AB 805 would be adequate hourly rest breaks during heat waves; shaded rest areas, where feasible; training for foremen and supervisors in spotting heat illness, providing first aid and summoning emergency help. The bill passed the Assembly and is in the CA Senate.
Large Prostitution Ring Broken in LA and SF

Authorities in Los Angeles and San Francisco have arrested 52 people, taken 46 South Korean women into custody and smashed what officials called one of the largest smuggling and prostitution rings ever uncovered in California. The investigation took more than two years, using cooperating witnesses and wiretaps.

Investigators searched 28 Southern California locations and seized nearly $300,000 in cash and more than $650,000 in bank accounts. They expected to seize an additional $800,000 in bank accounts. About $100,000 in cash was found hidden in a bag of dog food.

U.S. Atty. Debra Wong Yang described the ring as operating “a sophisticated human smuggling scheme believed to have brought hundreds of South Korean women into the United States to work as prostitutes” in California, Texas and Colorado. Some were smuggled into the country across the Mexican and Canadian borders. Others traveled to the United States on fraudulently obtained visitors visas, according to Yang’s office. Authorities allege that the women agreed to pay up to $16,000 each to be smuggled into the country.

The women were lured to the United States to work in brothels, which were housed in businesses such as chiropractic offices, acupuncture clinics, and so on.

Garment Factory Owner Sentenced to 40 Years for Human Trafficking

Kil Soo Lee, the former owner of an American Samoa garment factory, was sentenced in June 2005 to 40 years in prison for his role in holding over 200 victims in forced servitude. This was DOJ’s largest-ever human trafficking prosecution.

Lee, the owner of the Daewoosa garment factory, was convicted on February 21, 2003 of numerous federal criminal violations, including involuntary servitude, extortion and money laundering. Lee was charged in 2001, in the U.S. District Court in Hawaii, with illegally confining and using as forced labor over 200 Vietnamese and Chinese garment workers.

The workers were recruited from China and from state-owned labor export companies in Vietnam. They paid fees of approximately $5,000 to $8,000 to gain employment at the Daewoosa factory and risked retaliation and punishment at home if deported back to their native lands. Lee and his henchmen preyed on this vulnerability, and subjected the laborers to poor conditions and minimal pay. In March of 1999, after months of mistreatment, the workers complained about their plight and attempted to obtain food from local residents. Lee and his henchmen retaliated, using arrests, deportations, food deprivation and brutal physical beatings to force workers to operate the Daewoosa factory. In one episode, a woman was beaten so badly that she lost an eye. This abuse continued through November of 2000.

Kil Soo Lee was the third and last individual convicted in this case. In 2002, two of Kil Soo Lee’s co-conspirators, a manager and a garment worker, pleaded guilty to trafficking charges and were sentenced to 70 months and 51 months, respectively, in January 2004.

“Motivated by greed and with no regard for human dignity, these traffickers exploited more than 200 Vietnamese and Chinese workers,” said Bradley J. Schlozman, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Justice Department is firmly committed to ensuring that those who traffic in human lives are aggressively investigated, swiftly prosecuted and firmly punished. This sentence sends a clear message to those who would attempt to profit at the expense of another’s freedom.”

The Justice Department has increased prosecutions of human trafficking cases in recent years. Since January 2001, the DOJ has opened over 400 investigations and prosecuted 215 traffickers - triple the number prosecuted over the prior four-year period. (JUNE 23, 2005 WWW.USDOJ.GOV)
NY Lay Associate of Holy Name Sisters Uses Opportunity to Educate

In a letter to the Times Union Editor SNJM Associate Jane Pattison wrote, “It was encouraging to read Mishi Faruqee’s commentary in the Times Union (Albany NY newspaper June 17, 2005) pointing out “exploited girls are victims, not criminals.” I write as a member of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of the Holy Names, with Provincial Offices in Albany, NY, and we, along with other women religious and lay people as well as Catholic Charities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, have been deeply concerned with the issue of trafficking of women and children for several years. In the fall of 2004, the SNJMs, an international religious order of women, took a corporate stand in opposition to the trafficking of women and children worldwide, and we have been educating ourselves, our associates, colleagues and all those with whom and for whom we minister around the world about the far reaching effects of this horrendous crime against humanity.

We are gratified to learn of the Safe Harbor Act introduced again this year in the NY State Senate and Assembly by Assemblyman Adam T. Bradley and Senator Vincent L. Leibell, calls for amending the penal law by making it a crime to compel prostitution in the first degree. In addition, a bill sponsored by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Senator Frank Padavan, which creates penalties for those who commit trafficking crimes and also provides for victim assistance has been introduced in both houses. These bills, and perhaps more in process, give hope in our state that we can begin to curtail the buying and selling of women and children for sexual purposes which has become one of the most profitable criminal activities in the world.

We urge our New York State legislators to support these initiatives by voting these bills into law.”

Jane V. Pattison, SNJM Associate Justice & Peace Committee of the Sisters of the Holy Names 
June 24, 2005

Gallo Wine Boycott

According to the United Farm Workers (UFW) Gallo Wine owners provide chronically low pay to their vineyard workers and deny to the great majority of them humane living conditions, job benefits, job protections, and grievance rights. The UFW, a committee of Gallo of Sonoma workers, and supporters continue trying to bargain with the Gallos. The Gallos say they have no responsibility for the miserable conditions endured by their vineyard employees because they are “temporary workers” (See pg. 8 for action.)

Ring cont. from pg. 6

spas and massage parlors. The women were managed by what is described as “taxi” services that officials said arranged the prostitute’s schedules and worked with brothel operators. The women were moved to different locations in Southern California.

“This type of criminal organization exploits the hopes and dreams of immigrants,” said Yang at an LA news conference. “They exploited women, some of whom apparently suffered injuries as a result of their work.”

“Once they arrived, the women were expected to work as prostitutes, with a portion of their earnings going to repay their smuggling debts,” according to Yang’s office.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the IRS-Criminal Investigation Division conducted the investigation with the participation of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, the Santa Monica Police Department, the Redondo Beach Police Department and the Anaheim Police Department. 

(Excerpted from an article by a Times Staff Writer July 1, 2005)

Action

‘Las Hermanas’
25th National Assembly
Discusses Trafficking of Latinas.

The Assembly, entitled ‘Dichosa Mujer — Celebrating the Strength of Latinas,’ is scheduled for October 7 – 9, 2005 in San Antonio, TX.

The program will look at four key issues greatly impacting Latinas: AIDS, domestic violence, sexual abuse, immigration in relation to human trafficking of women and children.

The program will open with the stories of women who have experienced and survived these injuries. The afternoon workshops will offer deeper insight into each of these issues.

Las Hermanas-USA is a network of women’s groups united to empower themselves and others to participate actively in prophetic, loving transformation of Church and society through sharing the riches of Hispanic culture, language, spirituality, and traditions.

Costs: $85/person ($340 for five)
Mail Registration and Check to:
Las Hermanas USA
c/o Yolanda Tarango
PO Box 12074
San Antonio, Texas 78212
210-735-6910
hermanasusa@sbcglobal.net

Register for accommodations directly with:
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Riverwalk
1-888-623-2800
www.crowneplaza.com/sariverwalk

Heat Death cont. from pg. 5

Farm workers are toiling to supply food for people worldwide while putting their own lives at risk in the summer triple-digit temperatures of California’s Central Valley. If you live in California, please honor farm workers sacrifices by sending an e-mail today to ask your state senator to support AB 805.

If you have migrant field workers in your state, do you know if laws protect them from weather-related dangers? The battle against heat stress is one that farm workers cannot afford to lose.

Editor’s Note:
If you know of good video/book resources, please notify us so we can pass the word on to other readers. Thank you!

Informative Web Sites:
(Each contains information related to human trafficking)

To get ‘News from Brazil’ write to: sejup1@alternex.com.br

St. Thomas University
www.stu.edu/humanrights

Miami Declaration of Principles on Human Trafficking

Heat Death
http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/heatdeath705

‘No, Gallo!’ Boycott
http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/nogallo

Other information:
http://www.gallounfair.com/ or http://www.ufw.org

Stop Trafficking!
is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

Use the following web address to access back issues of Stop Trafficking!

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please use this e-mail address: jeansds2000@yahoo.com

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