

# Stop Trafficking !

## Anti Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

May 2014 Vol. 12 No. 5

This issue highlights how oppressive cultural biases and traditions have led to human trafficking related crimes affecting women and children.

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- Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, CA
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### The Fate of Noor

Two Peoria, AZ, detectives were listening to the police radio when a vehicle-pedestrian collision in a parking lot was announced. They thought little of it until the dispatcher said the collision was intentional and a young woman had been hit by her father.



Noor Almaleki, a 20-year old Iraqi-born Arizona woman, was run over and

killed by her father, Faleh Hassan Almaleki, because she refused to enter an arranged marriage in Iraq.

The police officer who responded to that call said a day rarely goes by that he does not remember Noor Almaleki and her situation. *"I think, 'How many other Noors are out there in the world and how can we help them?' That is what truly drives me."*

Appointed as liaisons by the AHA Foundation in 2012, the two detectives have dealt with about ten cases of honor crimes outside AZ, including in AK, PA, NY, CA and WA state and the number seems to be rising.

In February 2011, Almaleki was convicted of murder and sentenced to 34½ years in prison. (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/1/24/meet-the-cops-whosawewomenfromforcedmarriage.html>)

### Nigerian Victims Need Us!

Boko Haram, one of the most violent, misogynistic and notorious terrorist vigilante groups in the world, kidnapped as many as 267 Nigerian girls for human trafficking as sex slaves and child brides. The government is doing nothing to help them.

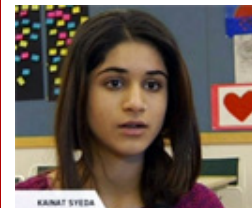
Join in calling on UN Women, UNICEF, and prominent UN ambassadors to pressure the Nigerian government to make rescuing these girls a top priority. *See page 8 for action.*

### 'I Will Be Mutilated'

In February 2014 Kainat Syeda, 16, faced being sent back to Pakistan with her mother. They had lived in the Stockholm area for three years and struggled to get permanent residency.

Syeda's birth father had abandoned her as a child; he wanted a boy. Her mother met a new man, who had a residency permit in Sweden, and they moved there. That man died suddenly in 2011 before he could adopt Syeda.

When examining the family's asylum application neither the threat of forced marriage nor genital mutilation had been pleaded as grounds for asylum.



*"My future is here, not in Pakistan. It's dark there,"* she told the news media. *"My uncle will marry me off and before that I will be mutilated."*

She claimed that if the deportation was carried through she would be forced to marry a man 25 years her senior and undergo genital mutilation in advance of any wedding.

Syeda's attempts to remain in Sweden sparked a social media campaign generating huge momentum online. A protest rally was due to be held just 24 hours before Syeda and her mother's original deportation date. At the 11th hour the Swedish Migration Board blocked the imminent deportation of Syeda and her mother after the threat of Syeda's genital mutilation and arranged marriage was factored into the case. (<http://www.nanews.net/news/pakistani-teen-allowed-to-stay-in-sweden/>)



## Awareness

### 'You Must Do the Marriage'

When Bangladeshi teenager 'Trisa' (not her real name) walked out of the Sydney Airport with her suitcase, she thought it was the beginning of a new and better life. But the 16-year-old quickly realized she was trapped and had little say about what had been planned for her.

She came to Australia to study accounting and live in a country where it was safe for her to walk down the street. Her uncle adopted Trisa and her younger brother and promised their parents he would help them get a better education. That was never his intention.

From the moment Trisa walked into her uncle's home in 2011, he began a campaign of harassment. He cut off her communication with anyone until she agreed to marry her 36-year-old cousin so the cousin could get a visa to live in Australia.

She was not allowed to call her worried parents or use a computer; she sometimes was prevented from going to school. The teenager had no money, no car and did not speak English.

*"I was just feeling, where should I go? I couldn't find anywhere to do anything,"* she said, telling her story for the first time. *"I didn't know anyone here and I was alone and my brother is younger than me. I can't share anything with anyone and I was feeling depressed."*

Trisa finally decided to share her tale after hearing of a 12-year-old girl who was "married" and had a sexual relationship with a 26-year-old man. Child abuse detectives in February 2014 arrested that child's "husband", her father and the Muslim cleric who conducted the illegal Islamic ceremony.

Under Australian law, people aged 16 or 17 who want to marry someone over

the age of 18 need the permission of a judge or magistrate and permission from both parents or guardians.

Looking back Trisa wishes there had been information at the intensive language school she attended about where she could have gotten help. *"I tried to do my study or just go out or walk on the road because I didn't want to stay at home. If I stayed in the house my uncle would talk about that thing [marriage],"* she said. *"I felt so miserable. I had everything in my mind. It was so hard."*

The uncle began sending emails through her to her 36-year-old cousin. She believes he was constructing a "fake relationship" that would convince authorities the pair were a couple. For more than 12 months her uncle constantly told her to "do the marriage" and asked her to sign papers. *"You do me a favor! I bring you here, give you study and a new life you must do the marriage!"* her uncle would scream.

Her parents were livid and asked for the uncle to send their children home but he refused unless they paid him \$10,000 - money they couldn't afford. They were not able to speak to their daughter or son until she saved up to buy a SIM card many months after she had arrived.

Trisa said the thought of marrying her cousin made her sick. *"I see him as my brother. I just don't want to marry my brother because it's horrible. I wasn't ready for marriage I just wanted to do the study,"* she said. *"It's about my life, and I want to make my own decisions."*

Her uncle said she could divorce her cousin as soon as he arrived in Australia but nothing he said or did convinced her to agree.

Once a month her uncle held a meeting in his house for the Buddhist community and Trisa would scan the room looking for someone she could confide in. Eventually she found Natalie, Pankaj and Maire - who had always suspected something was wrong.

*"I just thought she was really, really lonely and she just looked dead in her face,"* Natalie said. Members of the Bangladeshi Buddhist community in Sydney confronted the uncle but he remained adamant he would marry off his niece.

In October 2012, Trisa packed her bags and walked out the doors with Natalie and Pankaj. She later moved into the attic of their Newtown house with her younger brother. *"We had to kidnap her essentially,"* Natalie said.

Because the uncle was not successful in forcing Trisa to marry, he could not be charged.

Now Trisa sits in her new Newtown apartment and speaks about the joy she found earning her own money as a cleaner each day and studying every night. *"What I think Australia can do is be more aware of forced marriage, make people aware of this and try to change people's minds,"* she said.

She would never have been able to escape without help and feared for other girls in similar situations, she shared. *"It's just so bad at that young age - people can't understand anything. They are just children they don't know the environment or world very well."*

Trisa and her brother were able to go home and visit their parents in December 2013 and plan on finishing their studies in Australia.

(<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/child-told-to-wed-by-uncle-you-must-do-the-marriage-20140215>)



## Awareness

### 'Make Her a Virgin Again'

A frantic mother, Mrs. Y, brought her 15-year-old daughter, D, into an obstetrics and gynecology clinic. Mrs. Y demanded that the doctors, "Make my daughter a virgin again or I will have a heart attack." Dr. R examined D and spent considerable time talking with her alone and then with Mrs. Y.

Mrs. Y explained that D told her that she had sexual intercourse with another student at school because of peer pressure. The mother was distraught because D was to go to Yemen to be married. There D would be examined by a doctor who was an agent of the prospective groom's family. Mrs. Y believed without hymenoplastic surgery D would not seem to be a virgin upon examination or might not bleed on her wedding night. The bloody sheets must be hung out the window to prove a bride's virginity when she marries, D's mother said. She was fearful that "there will be an honor killing" if her daughter did not appear to be a virgin or did not bleed. It was also a matter of family honor for D to be married since her parents, unknown to D, had promised her in marriage to a Yemeni man.

Dr. R explained that even with the surgery D might not bleed. If the scar was new, it would be more likely to bleed but if the scar was tiny or old, it might not bleed. Moreover, the procedure could cause scarring and result in painful intercourse in the future. Thus, even if Dr. R did the hymenoplasty, she could not assure Mrs. Y that D would bleed on her wedding night. Dr. R said that a certain percentage of girls do not bleed even though they are virgins. She asked Mrs. Y what happens to those girls. Mrs. Y said that she did not know.

When D spoke without her mother being present, she told Dr. R and a social worker that her father was going to "marry her off to some old man." She supposed that she might either be left in Yemen to be somebody's third wife or used as a means for her husband to find an easy way into the U.S. as her spouse.

D appeared to Dr. R to be a typical American teenager, who did not want to leave school, did not want to return to Yemen, did not want to get married yet, and did not want to have a hymenoplasty. Dr. R believed that D, although still a minor and legally incompetent, had sufficient decision-making capacity to decide for herself and consequently Dr. R declined to do the procedure.

But on a subsequent visit, D said she wanted to have the hymenoplasty because she had decided to go to Yemen. After consultation with other physicians, Dr. R agreed to the surgery. Mrs. Y signed the consent form and paid for the surgery.

*Article continues, next col.*

### Marriage Fraud

It was supposed to be a family visit, a trip back to Pakistan to renew ties with relatives she had not seen since she was a child and her family immigrated to the U.S. It was 2010, and Amina Ajmal was 19, a young woman from Brooklyn, N.Y., who willingly boarded an international flight that would change her life.

Nearly four years later, Ajmal is in hiding, protected by U.S. officials. Her 60-year old father, Mohammad Ajmal Choudhry, is in custody, accused both of immigration fraud by forcing Ajmal into

Marriage Fraud cont. pg. 4

### Medical Moral Issues Involved

In her article, "Make Her a Virgin Again: When Medical Disputes about Minors are Cultural Clashes" author Loretta M. Kopelman exposed the complexities of resolving issues with mixed cultural and religious factors impacting a patient, as in the case of Mrs. Y and her daughter, D.

Kopelman argues that, in deciding what was in D's best interest, the health care professionals should have focused on how to protect a minor who was in danger while in the care of her parents. Perhaps doctors failed to file a report about suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS) or to the police because they were trying to be respectful of cultural diversity.

But such reasons are less compelling than D's right to have her emerging autonomy respected, as well as be protected from a forced marriage or potential honor killing. Dr. R failed to see that the hymenoplasty offered questionable protection. The health care professionals neglected to make protection their primary goal.

This case raises unresolved moral problems. What is the scope of people's moral or professional duties to rescue others in great need? How can we change the policies and laws to be more responsive to the growing problem of forced marriages?

Greater visibility of these problems in the U.K. has led to changes in their laws about what constitutes child abuse, neglect, or endangerment and about the development of better means for police and protective services to protect these minors. These changes are also needed in the U.S.

Sadly, health care professionals did not know what happened to this child.

(<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24363443>)





## Awareness

### Marriage Fraud

cont. from pg. 3

a marriage with a Pakistani man and of ordering the murders of two members of the family who helped her escape from three years of captivity, with her own kin holding her prisoner.

"I will kill them. I will kill one of theirs," Choudhry had said to his daughter over the phone, according to a transcript of a recorded call in the court document. He was referring to the family of Shujat Abbas, the relative who helped Ajmal escape. Soon after, the father and sister of Abbas were killed in Pakistan.

In February 2013, the U.S. government put Choudhry into federal detention in Brooklyn, charged with threats, conspiracy to murder and immigration fraud. He is being held while court proceedings continue.

This gripping saga is also a textbook case of how forced marriage plays into some cases of immigration fraud.

According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) marriage fraud, a subcategory of immigration fraud, occurs when "a U.S. citizen is paid or asked to perform a favor to marry a foreign national" or enters a "'mail-order' marriage where the U.S. citizen or alien knows it is a fraud."

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) states that a marriage petition must be denied if there is evidence that the marriage was entered for the purpose of evading immigration laws.

For Sujata Warriar, director of the NY State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, immigration fraud and forced marriage are closely linked. Often, she said, cases involve young girls who are unaware they are travel-

ing to get married. She works with members of the West Asian and Asian/Pacific Islander communities in NY.

"When young women reach 16 and older here, normally they would be dating," said Warriar. "So because of those circumstances they may be taken forcibly sometimes on the pretext of going on summer vacation. Then they are married off to men in their home countries." When they return they are with their new, unwanted husbands. Warriar said that most victims in New York are U.S. citizens and therefore could legally sponsor a spouse to come back.

Bandita Sharma, an immigration attorney, wants more information to be available to victims of forced marriages on where they can go for help.

"Whenever someone is married abroad and is coming to the U.S. with their new husband, I think they should get information on who they can call and where they can go if they are forced or if the relationship turns violent," Sharma said. "Just even a pamphlet."

Bryan Lonagan, an attorney for the Legal Aid Society, said that many forced marriages exist "as a way to get more family members" into the U.S. and that since arranged marriages are legal and typical for some cultures, detecting coercion can be difficult for authorities. "I have seen many cases of U.S. citizens returning to the homeland," Lonagan said. "These are young American women being compelled to marry in an arranged way that seems legitimate." Fraudulent, forced marriages are difficult to detect because of the outward appearance of legitimacy. "As long as they are living together, sharing assets, no one is going to think to ask, 'Did they really want to get married?'" he said.

(<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/1/23/family-saga->)

### Child Marriages

Top 20 Countries	% girls Married before 18
Niger	75
Chad	68
Central African Republic	68
Bangladesh	66
Guinea	63
Mozambique	56
Mali	55
Burkina Faso	52
South Sudan	52
Malawi	50
Madagascar	48
Eritrea	47
India	47
Somalia	45
Sierra Leone	44
Zambia	42
Dominican Republic	41
Ethiopia	41
Nepal	41
Nicaragua	41

### Cases in the U.S.

(Taken from a 2011 survey by the Tahirih Justice Center. Numbers in parentheses indicate number of respondents. Survey pg. 11)

#### Countries of Family Origin

Afghanistan (9), Bangladesh (14), Bhutan (5), Bosnia (2), Burkina Faso (3), Burma (8), Cambodia (3), Cameroon (1), Chad (2), China (5), Colombia (1), Congo (2), Dominican Republic (2), Egypt (2), El Salvador (2), Eritrea (1), Ethiopia (4), France (1), Gambia (2), Guatemala (2), Guinea (6), Honduras (1), India (39), Iran (4), Iraq (5), Ivory Coast (3), Jordan (4), Kenya (1), Korea (1), Laos (3), Mali (3), Mexico (28), Morocco (3), Nepal (5), Pakistan (39), Palestine (3), Philippines (12), Poland (1), Romania (3), Russia (5), Saudi Arabia (3), Senegal (1), Sierra Leone (2), Somalia (9), South Africa (1), Sri Lanka (1), Sudan (6), Syria (2), Thailand (5), Togo (1), Tunisia (1), Turkey (1), United Kingdom (1), Uzbekistan (2), Vietnam (4), Yemen (9).

#### Religious Backgrounds

Muslim (85); Christian (29) (which includes Catholic (15), Baptist (1), Evangelical (1), and Jehovah's Witness (1)), Hindu (16), Buddhist (8), Sikh (3), Jewish (2), Indigenous Faith (1), Shamanism (1).



## Awareness

*“With respect to forced marriage in the U.S. today, we’re back where we were with domestic violence 30 years ago. Just as the problem was hidden from view because it was considered a private family matter, forced marriage hides behind a cultural and religious curtain.”*

Jeanne Smoot, Tahirih Justice Center’s Senior Counsel for Policy and Strategy

## Forced Marriage in Immigrant Communities in the U.S.

In 2009 the *Tahirih Justice Center* (TJC) began to observe an increasing number of forced marriage cases involving young women and girls, some as young as 13, from traditional immigrant communities in the U.S. By force, fraud, or coercion, they were being compelled to marry men from their families’ countries or regions of origin, and if the young woman was a US citizen, she might then be forced to sponsor a fiancé or spouse visa to enable the groom to come to the U.S.

TJC also observed how few resources and legal options existed in the U.S. to assist individuals facing forced marriages, as well as how little awareness or understanding there was nationwide about the dynamics and challenges in forced marriage situations.

TJC developed and fielded a national survey to see if other service providers were encountering forced marriage cases, to learn about their experiences, and to call attention to this serious but hidden problem. The web-based survey, which ran from May 11 to August 5, 2011, was distributed electronically to thousands of organizations and agencies around the U.S. that may have encountered forced marriage cases, including legal and social services providers, advocates, community and religious leaders, educators, law enforcement officers, and other professionals. Over 500 agencies in 47 states (and Guam) responded.

Through their Survey TJC identified as many as 3,000 known and suspected cases between 2009-11 in the USA. This statistic included persons who were U.S. citizens who had been forced to marry in the U.S.

### **Forms of Force, Fraud or Coercion**

Survey respondents reported a wide range of tactics involved in the forced marriage cases they encountered, and identified the following as very commonly used or threatened against victims (the number of respondents is indicated in parentheses throughout):

- emotional blackmail (e.g., a parent threatens self-harm, or asserts that the family’s or individual’s reputation will be ruined if they resist the marriage) (120);
- isolation tactics (e.g., the family severely limits the individual’s social contacts or ability to leave the home, or the individual is not allowed to go to school) (106);
- social ostracization (e.g., threatening that the individual will be an outcast in their community) (87);
- economic threats (e.g., family threatens to kick the individual out of the house or withdraw support) (84);
- threats of physical violence (against the individual facing forced marriage or against those they care about or those who try to help them) (78). Less common, though not rare, tactics used or threatened against forced marriage victims, included:
- immigration-related threats (e.g., threatening to get the individual deported) (72);
- physical violence (69);
- deception/tricking (e.g., telling a young woman she is being taken abroad to visit a relative when really she is being taken abroad to get married) (61);
- death threats against the victim (40);
- stalking the victim (e.g., a family

- member follows the individual when they leave their home) (38);
- kidnapping/forcing the individual to travel abroad (33);
- holding the individual captive/physically restrained (30);
- marrying off an individual without that individual’s participation or knowledge (e.g., where laws or customs of a country allow families to conclude a marriage) (29).

Respondents (25) also reported cases involving serious bodily injury to the victim, situations where food (23) or medical care (22) was withheld, instances where a marriage certificate was forged (13), or where the individual facing forced marriage was falsely accused of a crime or reported as a runaway/missing child to enlist law enforcement help in returning the individual home (10). Some respondents reported encountering cases where the victim was drugged/incapacitated (8) or threatened with having their children taken away (2). Other respondents encountered forced marriage victims who had contemplated or attempted suicide (42). Respondents also reported murder attempts among the forced marriage cases they encountered (13), and 1 respondent reported an actual murder. (TJC Survey pg. 8-9)



**TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTER**

To read the full TJC Survey, go to:

<http://www.tahirih.org/advocacy/policy-areas/forced-marriage-initiative/>



## Advocacy

### 'Heartbeats: The Izzat Project'

Seven young South Asian women came together from March to September of 2012 to share stories, heal and participate in arts-based workshops. The stories they shared during sessions were garnered through conversations with peers, community members, novels and various news sources.

These IZZAT Project group members developed and formed these conversations into six stories. Drafts were read aloud and further developed through role-playing and theatre based activities, drawing out key parts to the stories. The illustrations were created from the women's sketches, discussions and continuous feedback.

The outcome of their efforts entitled, 'Heartbeats', tells the stories of South Asian women from a diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds. It addresses challenges from expectations these women face when they move away from home, choose partners of their own, come to terms with their sexuality and discuss sexual abuse, and find their own understanding of spirituality and religious beliefs.

'Heartbeats' aims to give a different portrayal of how young women from the South Asian diaspora living in North America face damaging cultural norms, expectations, and abuse from their communities and families.

In Urdu, *izzat* translates as *honor* or *respect*, often with the connotation of a familial honor or respect that is garnered or lost by another's actions or beliefs. Many of the stories touch on how South Asian families identify their *izzat* to be of the utmost importance. *Izzat* is used to justify abuse towards women who live lives of their own that don't conform to societal expectations. Maintaining familial *izzat* is often accomplished through shaming and the abuse of individuals who live on their own terms.

The authors of the project addressed *izzat* in their introductory note:

*"To our diverse, complicated, vibrant, funny, fluid communities: "Our bodies belong to us, not to patriarchs, media or governments. 'Heartbeats: The IZZAT Project' affirms our right to safety. "When violence happens in our families, we need a different response...not stigma, shame or guilt, but support, understanding and a commitment to change things. "We know that many of us, if not all of us, are survivors of violence, be it physical assault, colonization, racism, sexism, partition, or forced marriage. We believe that our communities can be sites of healing."*

For more information about 'Heartbeats: The Izzat Project' go to: <http://pomegranatetreegroup.tumblr.com/IZZAT>

or contact: [pomegranatetreegroup@gmail.com](mailto:pomegranatetreegroup@gmail.com)

## The Impact of Culture and Religion

Under Orthodox Jewish law, a woman cannot commence a divorce action, and even if she manages to obtain a divorce in a civil court, that action has to be approved by the Beth Din, a rabbinical court system. Her husband then has to sign a 'get,' a religious decree, before the divorce is recognized by her community and family, and husbands are not always willing to do this.

In some cases, religious law can work in a woman's favor. Arranged marriages are commonplace in Muslim communities, but it is strictly forbidden in Islam to force a woman into marriage.

"Before a woman gets married, the imam has to take her aside and ask if she is being forced," said Shehnaz Abdeljaber, a Palestinian-American who is president of the board at Unchained. Abdeljaber's family arranged a marriage to her cousin when she was just 18. When she told her father that if she went through with the marriage, it would be forced, he relented, and she was allowed to break off the engagement.

Not all families in Muslim and other communities are as considerate, however, and many girls who resist marriages are subject to violence and even death threats. (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/1/22/how-a-bride-forcedto-marrybecameunchainedatlatl.html>)

Khalid Latif, imam and executive director at New York University's Islamic Center, said that culture is often used as wrongful justification to force young Muslim girls to marry. For Latif, as a religious leader, this practice is morally incompatible with religious practices and mainly occurs because of precedents in communities.

"When somebody is getting married against their will, that is where it becomes religiously impermissible," he said. "By no means is forced marriage sanctioned and allowed within Islam as a tradition." (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/1/21/forced-marriage-isaliveandwellintheus.html>)



Cover of the Comic, 'Heartbeats'





## Advocacy

### Documentary Won an Emmy

Deeyah Khan's documentary film, *'Banaz: A Love Story'* about the murder of Banaz Mahmud, is helping to highlight the social pressures behind such crimes and bring change.

The film recounts the "honor" killing in London in January 2006 when Banaz Mahmud, aged 20, was murdered by her family, Iraqi Kurds, who felt she had dishonored their community by deserting her abusive rapist husband and later falling in love with a man of her own choosing.

Banaz had gone five times to ask for police help and tell them her life was at risk. She even named her future killers on videotape with the words, *"If anything happens to me, it's them."* She was raped and strangled and her body was buried in a suitcase.

Khan won an Emmy for the film, which is now used as part of the UK's police training programs to educate officers on the real threat that faces many young women trapped inside honor-based cultures in Britain.

In so doing they will be bringing full circle a case that brought reprimand from the Independent Police Complaints Commission for the way officers failed Banaz Mahmud in life, as well as praise for the Scotland Yard team who secured justice for her in death, travelling to Iraq to capture the murderers.

Khan said, *"I'm pleased because I didn't want the film to be an excuse for people to justify their prejudices, against Muslims or against immigrants. 'Honor' killings and forced marriages are not a Muslim thing; they happen in Sikh, in Hindu, even in Christian societies structured so the rights of the group are enforced at the expense of the individual."*

Banaz's father and uncle were jailed for life for murder in 2007. Two other men, who had fled the country after the murder, were brought back, the first ever extradition from Iraq to the UK, by Detective Inspector Caroline Goode and jailed for more than 20 years each.

The charity *Karma Nirvana*, which helps young women facing forced marriage, is so concerned at the unchecked prevalence of forced marriage it is presently campaigning for head teachers to face reprimands for failing to report any child who disappears from their school registers. *"The majority do not ask for help. They compromise for the sake of community honor, and sacrifice themselves, not contributing to our society. There is a sickeningly large number of kids in the UK suffering a living death."*

(<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/oct/13/emmy-honour-killing>)

### Hotline to Help Child Brides

The act of forced marriage was criminalized in Australia in 2013 but the law has had little effect. Therefore Dr. Eman Sharobeem, manager of the *Immigrant Women's Health Service* in Fairfield, Australia, is setting up a bilingual hotline so young girls can call to get help. The abuse they suffer is that of forced marriage. Sharobeem has encountered 60 such cases in the past three years, 20 of which were girls coming to her Center for help.

Sharobeem explained that underage marriage was carried out by many cultures across Asia, India and the Middle East and has little to do with religion. Once girls are married there is intense pressure from their communities to keep them where they are. *"If they leave they will be called sluts, home wreckers and [accused] of destroying the family,"* Sharobeem said.

Immigrants came to Australia with zero information, but are quickly taught not to allow their women to integrate. *"I've heard men shouting [to new arrivals]: 'This country is about supporting women. It is our rule as head of the family to keep the women away from the bad influence of the country and not let them learn English.'" One woman recently came to her in tears and said her husband, who was still awaiting clearance in the detention center, threatened to kill her if she learned English or went out of the house without him. "This is happening in Australia. We are not in the suburbs of Afghanistan - this is the suburbs of Sydney."*

A couple came to Sharobeem's office and proudly said they had just celebrated the wedding of their daughter in Iraq. She said, *"Fantastic! Where is she?"* They pointed to a petite and silent 14-year-old girl sitting next to them. *"I looked at the child in the room and I froze."* The child bride was two months pregnant and in need of a doctor. Sharobeem told them to take their daughter to see a nurse. She planned on reporting the underage marriage to police once she knew the girl was safe but her parents never returned. *"The father called saying, 'Doctor, my daughter lost the baby and we actually send her back to Iraq, so you don't need to worry about her.'"*

Dr. Sharobeem has stopped parents from taking their children overseas to marry by alerting the Australian Federal Police and adding the names of children to the airport watch list. But she said she has to be careful with what she reports so as to maintain the trust of her clients and to ensure people will allow their daughters and wives to visit the center.

She believes forced and underage marriages will not stop until immigrants receive education as soon as they step onto Australian soil. If they are not educated about Australian values and laws, new arrivals will continue to be taught by already settled communities who support the illegal practice of child marriage. (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/hotline-plan-to-help-hidden-child-brides-in-sydney->)



## Action

### Resource to Address Vulnerable Youth

The 'Guidance to States and Services on Addressing Human Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States', released in 2013, points out the frequent presence of child victims of commercial sex among runaway and homeless youth and the potential vulnerability of minors in the child welfare system to human traffickers.

The *Guidance* describes the health-related problems faced by child victims, and the need for coordination and collaboration among numerous federal, state, and local partners to adequately identify and serve them and to prevent child sex trafficking. It also provides a list of resources to assist child victims of trafficking.

Download the *Guidance* from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau at:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/human-trafficking-guidance>

### Lawyers Confront Modern Slavery in America

'*VS.Confronts*' is an innovative pro bono project conceived and executed by the *Women's Leadership Initiative* of the law firm Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP.

The *vsconfronts.org* website is dedicated to heightening public awareness of human trafficking in America and providing a platform for anti-trafficking organizations and agencies to work collaboratively and innovatively together, outside their organizational silos, toward common goals.

For an extensive library of resources, visit: <http://www.vsconfronts.org/library/>



**Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline**  
**National Human Trafficking**  
**Resource Center**  
**1.888.3737.888**  
 or text **HELP** or **INFO** to  
**BeFree (233733).**

### Sign Petitions for the Nigerian Girls

<http://www.walkfree.org/nigerian-schoolgirls/>  
<http://act.watchdog.net/petitions/4607>

### Summer 2014 Human Trafficking Academy July 28 – August 1, 2014

Through ten intensive and interactive courses taught by top-level experts, academics and practitioners, *St. Thomas University's School of Law* in Miami, FL, aims at providing valuable knowledge, effective skills and helpful tools to address human trafficking: commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking.

Academy participants will gain insight into various manifestations of human trafficking, best approaches and successful practices in addressing the problem, modalities of working with survivors, as well as ways of partnering with the public and private sector and with the community at large, in order to develop a cohesive anti-trafficking strategy.

Upon completion of the training, Academy participants will be awarded a Certificate by *St. Thomas University School of Law*. Continuing education credits will be available for lawyers, social workers and other professionals.

To register for the Academy, visit: [www.humantraffickingacademy.org](http://www.humantraffickingacademy.org) and click: "Summer Academy Enroll Today."

### Educational Resource

The *Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans* (ACRATH) developed a new online education resource for high school students, which can be accessed at: <http://acrath.org.au/education-resource/>

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

**AHA Foundation**  
*Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Founder*  
<http://theahafoundation.org/>

**Unchained At Last**  
<http://www.unchainedatlast.org/>

**Global Justice Initiative**  
 Resource Library on Forced Marriage  
<http://globaljusticeinitiative.wordpress.com/gji-e-library/library-2/>

**Karma Nirvana UK**  
<http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/>

### Research Report 'End Child Marriage'

To access the report on forced marriage of children in Australia, go to:  
[http://www.aic.gov.au/library/alerts/child\\_protection/201401.html](http://www.aic.gov.au/library/alerts/child_protection/201401.html)

### Legislation Is Needed

The following countries have criminalized forced marriage: Norway, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Cyprus, Malta, and the UK.

In 2012 alone, the U.K. Forced Marriage Unit noted 1,485 cases related to possible forced marriage.

***There are no U.S. federal laws protecting victims from forced marriage.***

Among U.S. jurisdictions, only nine (CA, DC, MD, MN, MS, NV, OK, VA, and the Virgin Islands) have legislation that could encompass forced marriage.

Write to your state and federal representatives to ask them to push legislation to eliminate forced and underage marriages:

<http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>

***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 past issues of *Stop Trafficking!* <http://www.stopenslavement.org/archives.htm>

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please contact: [jeansds@stopenslavement.org](mailto:jeansds@stopenslavement.org)  
 Editing and Layout: *Jean Schaffer, SDS*