



# LIKE PUTTING GASOLINE ON FIRE

THE PROLIFERATION OF INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY  
AND ITS EFFECT  
ON HUMAN SEX TRAFFICING

By The  Foundation

2007 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the slave trade in Great Britain. The anniversary of this monumental event is stained by the resurgence of a modern-day slave trade. The United Nations estimates that human trafficking generates \$7-\$10 billion each year, making it the third largest criminal industry in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The true damage of human trafficking is not measured in dollars, but in human lives. The U.N. reports “there are 12.3 million people in forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude at any given time; other estimates range from 4 million to 27 million. . . Sex trafficking is considered the largest specific subcategory of transnational modern-day slavery . . . Each year, more than two million children are exploited in the global commercial sex trade.”<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to popular belief this is not the problem of the developing world. The U.N. lists Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and the UK as “very high” or “high” for incidences of being destination countries.<sup>3</sup> The United States is also included: an estimated 100,000 to 3 million children in the U.S. alone are involved in prostitution – often they are the victims of sexual predators.<sup>4</sup> The average age of entry into the commercial sex trade is 11 to 14 years old.

The hope of economic improvement in other cities or countries often lures victims from their homes by perpetrators and once relocated, they are coerced into prostitution, pornography production, domestic servitude, farm or factory or other means of forced labor. In the relocation process, victims are bereaved of family, friends and acquaintances that may aid their escape and are imprisoned by financial limitations.

So called “sex tourism” is also a large part of human trafficking. Sex tourism involves mostly women and children who provide sexual services for foreigners in exchange for money. Perpetrators need “employees” to supply the demand; 90% of victims of human trafficking are kidnapped for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>5</sup> Some sex tourists justify their exploitation because of the poverty conditions of their victims. One “child sex tourist” said *“On this trip, I had sex with a 14-year-old girl [...] and a 15-year-old [...] I am helping them financially. If they don’t have sex with me, they may not have enough food. If someone has a problem with me doing this, let UNICEF feed them. I’ve never paid more than \$20 to these young women, and that allows them to eat for a week.”*<sup>6</sup>

What creates this sinister “market”? The answer is simple: **“Sex trafficking would not exist without the demand for commercial sex flourishing around the world.”**<sup>7</sup>

### **Internet Pornography Drives Sex Trafficking**

Sex trafficking is “the response to demand in the market; it is the supply of persons, especially women and children, who are brought into sexual slavery and exploitation.”<sup>8</sup> Shared Hope International recently released an investigative survey report of sex trafficking in four countries: Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands and the United States. It found that “Due to intensive marketing and the increased normalization of commercial sex in society, buyers from a young age are groomed to glamorize commercial sex, to dehumanize the women and children . . . it is clear that cultures of tolerance enable the process and even condone the purchase of commercial sex by buyers.”<sup>9</sup>

The report continued: “Viewing of adult pornography . . . is a primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex.”<sup>10</sup> Martin Barillas, a former human rights observer, characterized this way: “. . . technology is the single greatest facilitator and the engine behind the growth of the global sex industry. The use of the Internet for commercial sex services— particularly pornography and escort services—offers website visitors and owners anonymity and supports an illicit market.”<sup>11</sup>

Internet pornography drives sex trafficking. The addictive qualities of pornography, combined with the unlimited supply on the Internet, create a demand for sex. A woman who had been sexually prostituted described it this way: “Men witness the abuse of women in pornography constantly, and if they can’t engage in that behavior with their wives, girlfriends, or children, they force a whore to do it.”<sup>12</sup> The anonymity of the Internet removes the element of social stigma attached to viewing pornography. Men are then, again through the anonymity of the Internet, able to search for a “purchase” deviant sex services anywhere in the world.

## Sex Trafficking and Children

Nowhere is sex trafficking more heinous than in the abuse of children. Pornography is used to groom children for trafficking and abuse, and they are often then used in the production of pornography. Victims of child sexual abuse share stories of pornography as the tool of instruction. A former prostitute “Peggy” told of the desensitizing effect of pornography: “Starting at age 4, old Mr. Edwards up the street used pornography to entice me into taking a bath so he could watch, had me wearing his wife[’s] clothes and eventually having oral sex and being penetrated by him. This went on for five years. He used the pornography to show me how to be—and what to do—until I didn’t see anything wrong—with anything he did to me—or had me do to him.”<sup>13</sup> Peggy attributes the introduction of pornography, especially early on, to the sexual problems in her life, describing herself as addicted to sex as a way of getting through life.

In an August 2003 report,<sup>14</sup> Dr. Reina Michaelson, who is a member of the United Nations Children’s Fund<sup>15</sup> Viet Nam committee, stated that the Philippines were also impacted by the 1960s and 1970s growth of Western child pornography. When Western governments implemented stricter legislation to curb the industry producers and pedophiles relocated to developing countries, including the Philippines, Thailand and Brazil, where laws were lenient. Weak legislation and poverty made local children especially vulnerable and some offenders established permanent residence and business ventures to capitalize on the opportunity to employ their illicit behaviors.

“Studying the documented cases of child pornography and child sex tourism in the Philippines, it is clear that a strong link may be found between the two phenomena. Indeed, often the cases are one and the same—a child is sexually abused by the foreign pedophile, for example, and at the same time, a videotape is made of the encounter. In the Philippines, child sex tourism cases are almost always also child pornography cases.”<sup>16</sup> A Philippine Bureau of Immigration and Deportation investigation of the small village of Pagsanjan, Laguna led to the 1998 arrest of 23 foreign men on counts of child abuse. These 23 men were given the opportunity to voluntarily depart from the country or face detainment in the Philippines, pending investigation of their cases.<sup>17</sup> Choosing to remain in the Philippines, American Andrew Harvey’s case revealed records of the abuse of over 590 Filipino children ages 7-17. These records contained descriptions of sexual acts Harvey asked of the children and photos of the children in the nude or while performing these sexual acts.<sup>18</sup> His compulsion to produce his own pornography is evidence of his personal consumption and the violent rotation of viewing the porn and then using sexual servicers to carry out the depictions continued.

Linking child pornography and child sex tourism, documented cases<sup>19</sup> show most child pornographers in the Philippines are foreign (the nationalities of the most frequent sexual offenders being Japanese, American, Australian and British) and operate with the assistance of local Filipinos who obtain children to be exploited. The victims are frequently local children, but on occasion include trafficked peoples.

The United States has seen a growing trend of young women lured, or in some cases downright kidnapped, from their families and forced into sex trafficking. Debbie, a 15-year old in Phoenix, was talking with a friend in her driveway when the friend pushed her into a car driven by two older men.<sup>20</sup> She was taken to an unknown location, drugged, and then raped. The men put an ad on the Internet and soon men of began arriving at the apartment to have sex with her. Debbie was eventually rescued by police after 40 days.<sup>21</sup>

Children are most often the victims of this “culture of tolerance.” Pedophiles use pornography to instruct the children on what to do. These predators first see it in a media form and then desire it or

in other words, their consumption of pornography drove their demand for sex with children. This in turn creates becomes a market for other consumers. A rapidly growing trend is the use cybersex dens based out of the Philippines where webcams are used to record live sexual exploitation of men, women and children and customers may purchase access with a credit card.<sup>22</sup>

### **Children Making Pornography**

Open and easy access to online pornography hurts our children in another way. Australian child psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg says that young teenage girls copy sex acts they see online.

"Girls have new sexual practices. We've found that when they view that stuff they feel compelled to copy it," he explained, "It's causing young women to do things they wouldn't have done but because it's online they think it's normal. We are talking about girls who have just come into puberty." He cited a popular teen magazine poll that said 41% of girls had been asked to post naked or semi-naked pictures of themselves on the Internet. Children, Dr. Carr-Gregg explained, don't understand that this is illegal.<sup>23</sup> Children also don't understand what they are seeing or doing. Children who normalize themselves become candidates for committing aggressive sexual behavior. They may end up becoming consumers in sex trafficking.

### **Affecting Demand**

Pornography acts as the textbook for prostitution and drives demand in the modern slave trade. The increased accessibility of pornography on the Internet has exacerbated the problem. Curbing the supply of available pornography will affect the demand. It is the only way to effectively combat sex trafficking.

The long term effects and the possibilities of today's children growing up in this pornified culture of tolerance are horrifying. Fears abound about children being groomed on pornography by adults; what about a child who starts exploring pornography on his or her own? They subject to the same psychological breakdown – becoming themselves greater candidates to do the victimizing. We are raising a generation of potential buyers in the international sex slave trade. Certainly not every child or adult who sees pornography on the Internet will participate in sex slavery or trafficking. But even if only one does – isn't that too much?

Human trafficking is a growing scourge in our time. Like the slave trade of old it will take years to root out those who operate the markets, as well as the feelings that drive demand. But we can start by changing the "culture of tolerance." We can start by changing the Internet to protect children from exposure to pornography and help them avoid the degrading and addictive path that can lead to sexual exploitation of others. We can start by making purveyors of commercial sex liable for their role in trafficking. **"Sex trafficking would not exist without the demand for commercial sex flourishing around the world."**<sup>24</sup>

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- <sup>3</sup> Appendix 5: *Trafficking in persons: global patterns*. United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes, April 2006. 7 November 2007, < [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/trafficking\\_persons\\_report\\_2006-04\\_appendices.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/trafficking_persons_report_2006-04_appendices.pdf)>.
- <sup>4</sup> Teen sex slave trade hits home. ABC News, January 30, 2007. Available online <http://www.abcnews.go.com/GMA/AmericanFamily/story?id=2834852&page=1>. Accessed October 4, 2007.
- <sup>5</sup> Former Ambassador at Large for Modern Slavery His Excellency John Miller. 25 May 2007 lecture to Brigham Young University Washington Seminar students at Milton A. Barlow Center 2520 L Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.
- <sup>6</sup> Andrew Oosterbaan, Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Statement at the U.S. Mid-Term Review following the 2002 World Congress against the Exploitation of Children (4 April 2006).
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- <sup>8</sup> Demand: A comparative examination of sex tourism and trafficking in Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States. Shared Hope International, 2007. 8 November 2007, <<http://www.sharedhope.org/files/DEMAND.pdf>>.
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- <sup>13</sup> Demand: A comparative examination of sex tourism and trafficking in Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States. Shared Hope International, 2007. 8 November 2007, <<http://www.sharedhope.org/files/DEMAND.pdf>>.
- <sup>14</sup> Dr. Reina Michaelson for UNICEF Viet Nam, *Child Abuse in Viet Nam: Final Report into the Concept, Nature and Extent of Child Abuse in Viet Nam* 61 (August 2003), citing Women's Union of Ho Chi Minh City. <http://www.unicef.org/>
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