

# **The Transnational Political Criminal Nexus of Trafficking in Women from Ukraine**

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### **Abstract**

Throughout the 1990s, tens of thousands of Ukrainian women were trafficked into prostitution. This phenomenon was researched by collecting data through interviews and surveys in Ukraine, media reports, governmental and non-governmental (NGO) reports on trafficking, and participant observation in conferences. Trafficking occurs because of a transnational political criminal nexus, which is comprised of individual criminals, organized crime groups, corrupt police and governmental officials, foreign governments, and NGOs. Traffickers' methods of operation are flexible and adapted to ease of recruiting victims, cooperation of corrupt officials, risk of being detected, and profit. In destination countries, victims are controlled by confiscation of travel and identity documents, debt bondage, threats, and violence. Political components of the nexus include foreign governments that support NGOs that ignore the views of civil society in Ukraine, and instead, support the foreign governments' positions on trafficking and prostitution, resulting in a corruption of civil society. Some foreign governments also support changes in laws that enable a legal flow of women into their sex industries.

## **Introduction**

Over the last decade, tens of thousands of Ukrainian women have been trafficked into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.<sup>1</sup> The buying, selling, and abuse of these women earns traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners billions of dollars each year. Although there has been a global outcry against this activity, there has been little success in stopping it.<sup>2</sup> The traffickers continue to operate with impunity because of a transnational political criminal nexus that maintains the flow of women from Ukraine to the sex industries abroad.

The trafficking of women is based on supply and demand between sending and received countries. Countries with legal or tolerated sex industries create the demand and are the receiving or destination countries, while countries where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending countries. The number and flow of women is based on a balance between the demand for women for prostitution and the ability of traffickers to recruit women. Although the exact number of victims is unknown, in 1998 the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior estimated that 400,000 Ukrainian women were trafficked during the previous decade.<sup>3</sup>

In countries of the former Soviet Union, the unregulated transition from socialism toward democracy and a market economy enabled organized crime and corrupt officials to seize control of much of the state apparatus and business sector resulting in the criminalization of the state and economy.<sup>4 5 6</sup> Networks of criminals and corrupt officials are significant components of the transnational political criminal nexus. To fully understand the forces that maintain the flow of women from Ukraine the conceptualization of the nexus has to be expanded beyond the usual bounds of analysis of organized crime and corruption to include the social sector. The social sector of society, referred to as civil society, is made-up of nongovernmental organizations, volunteer and community groups, charities, the church, and faith-based groups.<sup>7</sup> This paper will describe how corruption of civil society is a component of the political criminal nexus of trafficking in women.

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<sup>1</sup> Although trafficking for forced labor exists, more women are trafficked for prostitution than forced labor from Ukraine. This paper reports on research on trafficking for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.

<sup>2</sup> Remarks by Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings" *Council of Europe*, 9 April 2002, Accessed at <http://www.unhchr.ch/>

<sup>3</sup> International Organization for Migration, "New IOM figures on the global scale of trafficking," *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin*, No. 23, April 2001.

<sup>4</sup> William H. Webster, "Russian Organized Crime: A Report of the Global Organized Crime Task Force," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> William H. Webster, "Russian Organized Crime and Corruption—Putin's Challenge," Global Organized Crime Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Phil Williams (editor) *Russian Organized Crime: The New Threat?* London: Frank Cass, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Don E. Eberly, "The Meaning, Origins, and Applications of Civil Society," in the *Essential Civil Society Reader: The Classic Essays* (Don E. Eberly, Ed), New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.

## ***The Transnational Political Criminal Nexus of Trafficking in Women***

The transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking in women extends from individuals at the highest levels of government to the lowliest criminals. The nexus includes government officials, law enforcement personnel, legal and illegal businesses, individual criminals, organized crime groups, foreign governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Not all activities they engage in are illegal. Not all parts of the nexus collude with each other. Some components play parallel and supporting roles that do not appear to be connected to the others.

The goal of the transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking in women is to make money. The “commodities” and “services” that are bought, sold, abused, and exploited are women and children. The trafficking process begins with the demand for women and children to be used in prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation in the sex industry. Few women will enter into prostitution if they have other choices. Where the sex industries are large or the demand for prostitution is high, insufficient numbers of local women can be recruited. The women who enter prostitution out of desperation leave as soon as they have made enough money or better opportunities arise. Engaging in unwanted sexual activity with strangers multiple times per day is physically and emotionally stressful, causing women to become sick or suffer breakdowns.<sup>8 9</sup> Consequently, they are no longer attractive to men or profitable for the pimps.<sup>10</sup> Where brothel keeping<sup>11</sup> and pimping are illegal, police raids can result in the loss of women. Sometimes women escape. The turnover of women is high; therefore, replacements are needed fairly frequently. Brothel owners, pimps, and pornography producers place orders with traffickers for the number of women they need.

Traffickers select cities and regions in other countries based on the ease with which they can recruit women. The economic decline in most of Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in wide spread unemployment and poverty. Women, especially, have been politically and economically disenfranchised with few opportunities in the stagnated, criminalized economy and corrupt political system.<sup>12 13</sup> Under these conditions, women are eager to go abroad to find work and take their chances to achieve the Western lifestyles they see in the media.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Svetlana Iliina, “Female prostitution in the post-Soviet era: Violence against personality and violation of human rights,” Oral presentation at Kennan Institute (Copy of paper on file with authors).

<sup>9</sup> Melissa Farley, Isin Baral, Merab Kiremire and Ufuk Sezgin, “Prostitution in five countries: Violence and post-traumatic stress disorder,” *Feminism and Psychology*: Vol 8 (4) 405-426, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> I use the term “brothel” as a generic term. The sexual exploitation and abuse of women in prostitution takes place in many venues, such as bars, clubs, roadhouses, massage parlors, truck stops, spas, and along streets and highways.

<sup>12</sup> Vanessa von Struensee, “Gender Equality: Legal and Institutional Framework on Women’s Rights-Ukraine,” Email to Public Interest Law Initiative in Transitional Societies Access to Justice Forum, 15 January 2002.

<sup>13</sup> The MONEE Project, “Women in Transition: A Summary,” *Regional Monitoring Report Summary*, No. 6, UNICEF, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Donna M. Hughes, “Supplying Women and Children for the Sex Industry: Trafficking from the Russian Federation,” in *Sexualities in Post-Communism* (A. Štulhofer, T. Sandfort, V. Diehl Elias, and J. Elias, Editors) Forthcoming 2003.

Traffickers operate through employment and travel agencies that are often legally registered. They recruit women for various types of low skilled labor. Also, it is common for traffickers to use former trafficking victims or female members of the organized crime groups as recruiters. They contact friends, acquaintances, and relatives in communities where they are known and trusted. A few women know they will be in prostitution before they leave Ukraine, but are unaware of the violence and exploitation that is the norm in prostitution abroad. Most are recruited under false pretenses.

In some cases, the traffickers smuggle women across the border illegally. But, in most cases, the traffickers obtain the necessary identity and travel documents from other criminals who produce counterfeit documents or by working with corrupt officials who supply authentic documents. In some cases, corrupt passport or border control personnel allow women to leave Ukraine with inadequate documents. The traffickers purchase tickets and pay the travel expenses to the destination countries. Later, these expenses will be greatly inflated and the women coerced into prostitution to pay the debt.

In the destination countries, there are corrupt police and government officials in corresponding key positions who collaborate with the traffickers and pimps. Corrupt police and officials accept bribes to allow the illegal flow of women into the destination countries and sex industries, and sometimes fully collaborate in the trafficking operations. They assist the pimps and brothel owners by returning escaping women to brothels, or alert traffickers and pimps of the women's whereabouts.

In destination countries, strategies are devised to protect the sex industries that generate hundreds of millions of dollars per year for the state where prostitution is legal, or for organized crime groups and corrupt officials where the sex industry is illegal. The profits of these legal and illegal sex industries depend on maintaining the flow of foreign women. Here the political components of the transnational political criminal nexus play their role. In destination countries where the state is criminalized, the legislative bodies simply refuse to pass laws against trafficking (Russia is an example), or corrupt police and officials ignore the laws that exist. Another more long-term strategy of governments of destination countries is to use their power and influence to shape laws and policies on trafficking and prostitution that favor their industries and maintain the flow of women from sending countries. One way foreign governments do this is to corrupt civil society in sending countries to prevent the growth of a grassroots movement that opposes the flow of women to their sex industries.

During the Soviet period, prostitution was not considered a legitimate form of work; instead, it was suppressed and officially abolished. Although some Ukrainian citizens may have sympathy for a woman who is in prostitution to feed her family, mostly, a woman who is or has been a prostitute is highly stigmatized, and prostitution is not viewed as acceptable work. Even before the Soviet revolution, the position of women's NGOs was to combat prostitution and assist women in getting out of prostitution.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Kiev branch of The Russian Society for the Protection of Women, founded in 1900, was dedicated to helping poor women, especially those in prostitution. They ran a dormitory for women, a free legal clinic, a literacy program, a sewing school, and provided meals at a cafeteria. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life, 1884-1939*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1988, p. 36.

Soviet rule suppressed independent women's organizations and charities; consequently, civil society is under developed in Ukraine.<sup>16 17</sup> Still, a number of women's NGOs have formed to oppose trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women in prostitution. This nascent civil society has been corrupted by governments in destination countries by funding NGOs to promote the destination countries' policies on trafficking and prostitution. Their purpose is to legitimize and maintain the flow of women to the sex industries abroad. Thereby, the authentic voices of citizens in sending countries have been supplanted by the voice of the destination countries, resulting in a corruption of civil society.

These different political and criminal components form a nexus that maintains the flow of Ukrainian women into prostitution abroad. The nexus is complex, and there is not collusion among all the components; in fact, there is a struggle for control among some of the components. Some of the components work hand-in-hand in the brutal daily trafficking of women; others work separately, but in parallel, to legitimize the demand for women by the sex industries in destination countries.

In the following sections of this paper, the different components of the political criminal nexus of trafficking in women will be further described and findings of the US-Ukrainian research team will be reported.

## **Methods**

Research for this paper was undertaken by researchers in Ukraine and the United States as part of the US-Ukraine Research Partnership.<sup>18</sup>

Data was collected through interviews and surveys in Ukraine, from media articles, governmental and nongovernmental reports on trafficking, and participant observation in conferences and meetings.

Researchers from Ukraine examined 46 criminal cases of trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation and statistical data from several Ministries and agencies. They conducted a survey of 556 people on their attitudes toward and knowledge of trafficking of women. They conducted another survey of 160 young women graduates of high schools, colleges, and gymnasiums who would comprise a high-risk category for recruitment by traffickers. Researchers interviewed 68 people who were victims of crimes related to trafficking in women in six regional cities: Donetsk (4), Zaporozhe (16), Lvov (19), Kharkov (6) Kherson (6), and Chernigov (17). They interviewed 18 relatives of victims of trafficking in five regional cities: Zaporizhia (8), Lvov (4), Kharkov (2), Kherson (1), and Chernigov (3).

To learn more about the recruitment and trafficking of women, women in prostitution and pimps in Ukraine were interviewed. Also, sex industry businesses, such as European style nightclubs that featured strip shows, were visited and the owners interviewed. Various Ukrainian and international experts who had knowledge of victims and perpetrators of trafficking and prostitution were interviewed. Materials from various sources inside Ukraine, and from the countries of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Latvia, Turkey, Japan, and the United States were collected and analyzed.

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<sup>16</sup> Svetlana V. Kupryashkina, "Women and voluntary activities in Ukraine: A historic outlook and a view of Soviet state paternalism," Accessed at <http://antenna.nl/ywd/Gatherings/NIS/kupryash.html>

<sup>17</sup> Paul D'Anieri, Robert Kravhuk, and Taras Kuzio, "Politics and Civil Society" in *Politics and Society in Ukraine*, Westview, 1999, pp: 141-165.

<sup>18</sup> This partnership was a joint effort by the International Center at the U.S. National Institute of Justice and the Ukrainian Academy of Law Sciences.

The researchers in Ukraine incurred risks while collecting this data. In one instance, a pimp threatened one of the research assistants for trying to talk to the women. Most of the sources spoke to the researchers on the condition that they remain anonymous, including their affiliation with any official office or agency. Therefore, they can be identified only in the broadest terms in this report.

## ***Criminal Components of the Transnational Political Criminal Nexus***

### ***Traffickers, Organized Crime, and Corruption***

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine as a state, organized crime and corruption have thrived in the unregulated environment. Officials from the former Soviet government have maintained power and created alliances with the new “oligarchs,” resulting to a criminalization of the state and economy. Corruption in Ukraine is pervasive and systemic. On the Transparency International’s 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index, Ukraine was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world-83<sup>rd</sup> out of 91 countries.<sup>19</sup> Out of 14 Eastern European countries, Ukraine was considered the most corrupt.<sup>20</sup> Organized crime networks flourish in this corrupt environment. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 1991, there were 260 organized crime groups; by 2000, there were 960.<sup>21</sup> One of the activities of some of these groups is the trafficking of women.

Sixty five percent of cases of trafficking of women from Ukraine was carried out by organized crime networks. They traffic women because it is a high profit business with low investment. The networks are highly organized, have large-scale operations, and are connected to corrupt officials. The networks delegate specialized tasks related to trafficking in women, such as recruitment of women, preparation of documents, organization of travel, and delivery of the women.

These criminal networks are also involved in other criminal activities. They traffic drugs, stolen cars, and guns, conduct robberies, and are frequently involved in murders or contract killings. Their main activity is usually racketeering.

The size of the groups varies throughout Ukraine. The largest criminal groups in Ukraine with 20 to 30 members are in Odessa. In other regions, the groups are smaller, with five to six members. The criminal groups have territories they operate in, and are known to collaborate with officials who provide them with protection and authentic documents for travel.

Organized crime groups have databases of potential victims for trafficking from sources such as applications from women for beauty contests or marriage agencies. The databases include photographs of the women, height, weight, and personality traits.

Traffickers in Ukraine receive from US\$800 to \$2,000 per woman they deliver to pimps abroad. The value of the woman depends on her appearance and the destination country: The higher the economic development of the destination country, the higher the price that will be paid for her.

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<sup>19</sup> Transparency International, “New index highlights worldwide corruption crisis,” 27 June 2001, Accessed at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2001/cpi2001.html#cpi>

<sup>20</sup> Johann Graf Lambsdorff, “How Precise Are Perceived Levels of Corruption, Background Paper to the 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index,” *Transparency International*, June 2001, Accessed at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2001/report.html>

<sup>21</sup> A. N. Yarmish, “Introduction,” in *Organized Criminal Groups in Ukraine: Traditional and Typical*, Kharkiv: The National University of Internal Affairs, 2002, p. 4.

Eighty percent of the traffickers are Ukrainian citizens, and about 60 percent are women. The traffickers are usually not former criminals and have never been in prison. If they were known criminals, it would be more difficult for them to leave the country. The traffickers usually have good organizational skills; some worked as social organizers in the former Soviet Union. As a result, they are often well known and respected people. They often own licensed businesses, such as travel agencies. They are sometimes affiliated with “marriage” or “introduction” agencies. They usually have traveled abroad for commercial purposes in the past, and have established links to officials and pimps in destination countries. They know the market for women in Ukraine and abroad. They are familiar with the laws of each country, and know how to protect themselves from the police, either by working around laws or with corrupt officials.

### ***Traffickers’ Methods of Recruiting Victims***

Traffickers rely on the poor economy to create circumstances under which they can recruit women. Police officials who were interviewed thought that women were easily recruited to go abroad because of high unemployment in Ukraine, not because the woman wanted to be prostitutes. Because of these economic circumstances if someone promises a woman a job that pays US\$100/month, she will probably accept the “opportunity.” Police officers said they were aware of married women with 2-3 children who had to earn money, so turned to prostitution.

Most victims of trafficking are between 17 and 26 years of age. They are usually afraid to talk about their experiences. Even if they were coerced and beaten, they do not make reports to the police. Of the victims who were interviewed, only 12 percent tried to make a report to the police. They said the police and officials are corrupt and may give information about them to the traffickers. They fear retaliation from the traffickers, many of whom are members of organized crime groups. The victims believe it is too difficult to prove that a crime has been committed against them. They know there is inadequate protection for victims who make reports to the police. Also, they do not want their family and friends to know they were prostitutes. Even after they return from abroad, they say they worked as shop clerks or waitresses while abroad.

Approximately 80 percent of the victims were unemployed when they left Ukraine, and 60 percent of them remained unemployed upon their return. In the earlier years, victims were recruited from the cities, but more recently, the recruiters are moving into the countryside to small towns and villages to recruit women for work abroad. In agricultural areas, often there are no wages at all.

The pimps often use former victims of trafficking to recruit new victims. Friends and acquaintances that return from abroad with stories of how much money they made recruit women for pimps. The two Ukrainian pimps who were interviewed had formerly been prostitutes. They had little sympathy for the new victims saying that the same things, such as rapes and beatings, had been done to them. One pimp worked in Russia; the other in Greece.

The pimp who worked in central Moscow viewed herself as a “businesswoman.”

*From 1995 to 1998, I was a pimp in Moscow. I started by getting eight women from one of the pimps who left. The women were being raped and needed someone to organize them. Later, I had up to 20, even 25, women working for me. ...I recruited women from Zaporizhia and other parts of Ukraine. I paid \$100 for each girl who was sent. One woman recruited for me from Zaporizhia. Over the three-year period, about 15 women came from Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, L’vov, and other cities in Ukraine. Women were also sent from Belarus and Moldova. Russian women were sent from Staropol, Irkutsk and other Russian cities and regions. When the girls first arrived, I kept them in a flat for one month.*

*I had them watch pornography to learn what to do. I spent US\$2000-\$3000 on clothes for them. I took their passports until they repaid me the money. I taught the women how to treat men. How to act. How to talk. ... Some of the women only stayed 2-3 months; some were with me the entire time I was there.*

Women are frequently trafficked through travel or employment agencies. The agencies are usually legally registered. There are some travel agencies that are not legally registered, but when questioned by police they claim that only provide consultation services and therefore do not need a license. Traffickers sometimes extract money from the women before they leave by charging them as much of the travel expenses as the woman can pay. The women borrow money from relatives and friends to pay the expenses. According to police, seventy percent of trafficked women travel on authentic (not counterfeit) documents, such as tourist visas. The traffickers obtain these documents for the victims from corrupt officials.

The women appear to go abroad voluntarily and legally on tourist visas, but they do not return. There were reports of women being moved one at a time, and in other cases, in small groups. One police officer said that the traffickers move one woman at a time, sometimes two, but usually not more than three at a time. If the woman has authentic travel documents, she usually travels by herself and is given a phone number or address for a contact in the destination or transit country. In a few cases, traffickers collect women in small groups to be taken abroad by car or van. The movement of the women in groups is based on economy of scale, because bribes, documents, and travel arrangements are less expensive for a number of women rather than one at a time. There were reports of tourist groups of women who had gone to Turkey in which one half of the group did not return.

If the woman has counterfeit documents, her visa has expired, or she was smuggled into the destination country she may be afraid to return home because she does not have the proper documents.

Traffickers also recruit teen girls and children. In a few cases, children have been abducted and sold through illegal adoptions. There have been several cases in which parents sold their children to traffickers who resold them abroad. More commonly, traffickers present themselves to parents as representatives of foreign modeling schools for girls. Girls are invited to auditions by modeling agencies. The “modeling schools” in Ukraine offer to train girls in modeling and social skills. Girls, some as young as 10, are recruited for training classes. In one case, a 12-year-old girl studied at such a “modeling school” for 5 months. She was taught how to walk and pose. Photographs were taken in poses that suggested that the girls were being groomed for pornography and/or prostitution. One girl was photographed in only her panties and bra, and was told that the photographs were being sent to the United Arab Emirates. When a suspicious parent complained to the police about the activities of the “school,” the agency changed its name, but continued to operate. In these cases, parents are deceived and do not know that their daughter will be sold to a brothel.

Traffickers are known to operate as religious groups to recruit girls in Ukraine. In Kherson, there was a case of two “missionaries” from the U.S. who came to teach children English and the Bible. The children and parents were told that if the children learned English they could go to the U.S. to continue their studies. Parents eventually discovered that the children had been shown pornography, sexually abused, and prepared for prostitution. The teens and young adults ranged in age from 14 to 20. The girls were told that the group believed it was acceptable for adults to have sex with children. They were instructed not to write to relatives and to end all relationships with friends and relatives. The group planned to take the young women and girls to Italy. Their plan was discovered, but they escaped before they were arrested. Even as the traffickers were departing, they told some of the children they would send visas for them to join them abroad.

Homeless children are extremely vulnerable to recruitment by traffickers. In 2000, there were an estimated 100,000 homeless children in Ukraine. Many of them became homeless after their alcoholic or destitute parents sold their apartments for money. Little is known about this population in Ukraine, although information from Russia indicates homeless children and orphans are frequently recruited by pornographers and traffickers.<sup>2223</sup>

Approximately 70 percent of women are trafficked by means of sophisticated deceptions. The traffickers present credible, systematic plans so that victims have little suspicion that their destination is the sex industry. Mostly, the women are offered work abroad as a waitress or dancer. Traffickers approach beauty contest participants with offers of contracts with top foreign modeling agencies.

Traffickers are so adept at deceiving victims that sometimes the victim does not fully understand who was involved in selling her into prostitution. For example, the researchers found cases in which the traffickers recruited women for work abroad in typical jobs such as waitress or dancer. The trafficker delivered the woman to the work place and the woman worked for a week or two doing the job she expected. The trafficker returned and asked her if she was satisfied with the job. She was asked to sign a document indicating that she was satisfied with the service the “agency” provided in finding her a job abroad. After the trafficker departed with the signed document, the situation rapidly changed. The woman was beaten and forced into prostitution. Sometimes they were moved to other countries. The first job was just a stop in a transit country (maybe while necessary documents are being prepared), and another layer of deception was added to protect the trafficker from Ukraine. Often the victim only blamed the people in the transit or destination country for forcing her into prostitution and continued to insist the person/agency from Ukraine who assisted her was not involved.

In another case, a woman was offered a job in Turkey, where she was employed as a shop clerk in a clothing store. For the first week or two, the supervisor helped her learn the new job. Then she was given a quota on the number of items she had to sell each day. If she did not sell enough, a debit was assigned to her. When the amount of the debit rose to a large amount, she was forced into prostitution to pay the “debt.”

Trafficking in women is highly flexible. Criminals quickly adapt to different opportunities and in response to risks, so traffickers may operate one way in one region, but differently in another region. The same group may change their tactics from year to year. Strategies and techniques change according to profit, ease of recruiting victims, cooperation of corrupt officials, and risk of being detected.

### ***Connection Between Local Prostitution and the Transnational Trafficking of Women***

In major cities and trade centers, where there are foreign visitors, organized crime groups control prostitution. But generally, prostitution is not a major activity of organized crime inside Ukraine. The economy is so poor, and unemployment is so high, that men cannot pay much money to buy

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<sup>22</sup> Donna M. Hughes, “Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: The Case of the Russian Federation,” IOM Migration Research Series, No. 7, International Organization for Migration, June 2002.

<sup>23</sup> According to MiraMed Institute in Moscow, approximately 30 to 50 percent of orphans are recruited into crime, prostitution and trafficking within one year of leaving the orphanage at age 17. Sharon Ryan, “Training for life,” *AmCham News*, July-August 2000, p. 32.

prostitutes. The average price for a prostitute inside Ukraine is US\$3.00, so the amount of money that can be earned through prostitution is relatively small. Other criminal activities are more profitable.

Women in prostitution in Ukraine were interviewed to determine if traffickers tried to recruit them to go abroad. Six women who stood along the highway and were known to be narcotics addicts were interviewed. None of them said they had been invited to go abroad, nor would they go, if asked, because they were too afraid. They had heard many stories about what happened to women who went abroad. One woman said, "It is better to stay here, where I know things." Another woman said her friend went to Turkey. She told her that the men are violent there, so she said it was better to be in prostitution in Zaporizhia.

The women with narcotics addictions do not appear to be targeted for recruitment by transnational traffickers. Given their poor health, deteriorating appearance, and drug dependency, traffickers probably view them as poor investments to take abroad. Although, traffickers and pimps frequently pressure women to use drugs, and manipulate women's drug use, at some point, their physical dependency on drugs takes such a toll that she loses her value for pimps. Police confirmed this by saying that no one wants to take the drug-addicted women abroad.

Two women in prostitution from a nightclub and the city center talked about their friends being recruited to go abroad. The woman from the nightclub said she knew four women who went abroad. One went to Cyprus. She has now returned and reportedly "made a lot of money." Two went to Turkey. They told her they are living with Turkish men and are all right. One went to Egypt and has disappeared. A relative went to find her, but was unable to do so. She said that someone tried to recruit her to go to Italy, but she was too afraid because of the mass media stories about sexual slavery, and what she has heard from her friends.

The woman from the city center said that she had heard of women being taken to Serbia, Turkey, Germany, and Latin America. She said she knew one woman who went to Turkey for three years. After earning US\$7,000, the woman and her friends were deported because the owner didn't want to pay them the money. They came back to Ukraine with nothing. She had also heard of women going to Moscow, and then to Norway and Finland. A pimp arranges a bus that takes the women across the border. She said that each spring and autumn recruiters come and ask her and her friends if they want to go abroad. The recruiters promise the women an apartment, a bodyguard, and US\$10,000 per month. So far, she has always declined the offer because she is afraid of what might happen.

From these women's experience, it appears as if women in prostitution know about trafficking in women. Only the healthier, more attractive women without drug addictions are targeted for recruitment.

The police did not think that international pimping, meaning pimps moving women from Ukraine to other countries, occurred very often. More commonly, traffickers operated by recruiting women for employment, and then deceived them and forced them into prostitution once they were abroad.

Among the women who were willing to go abroad for prostitution, there was a flow of rumors about where the conditions were the best or the worst. Once one destination country got a poor reputation, the women tried to find one that was supposedly better. For example, after women heard that conditions in Moscow were bad, women were more willing to be recruited to go to the United Arab Emirates. In Middle Eastern countries, Russian and Ukrainian women were reportedly paid more, and for a while the rumor was that Arab men treated the women better than the Chechens. Both the women and police said that the conditions for women in prostitution were the worst in Turkey and Yugoslavia. They women said they had heard they are more likely to be mutilated in Turkey or enslaved in Greece. If the women had a choice, they preferred Western European destinations. Each

woman thought that the experience would be different for her, that she would be able to control the situation, or that the conditions would be different in another country.

### ***Destination Countries for Women Trafficked from Ukraine***

Frequent destination countries for trafficked women from Ukraine are: Turkey, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Israel, Syria, and China.

There are no official records on the number of Ukrainian women deported from other countries. There are a few numbers from organizations that assist returning victims. In October 2000, there were 185 women returned to the Kyiv airport by authorities in other countries. Mostly, the women came from Turkey, Israel, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Switzerland.<sup>24</sup> In 2000, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted 81 victims of trafficking to return to Ukraine—27 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 18 from Germany, 11 from Bulgaria, 9 from Kosovo, and 8 from Italy. In the two-year period of 1999 through 2000, La Strada assisted 44 women in returning to Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> In the mid-1990s, two-thirds of the victims that The Foundation Against Trafficking in the Netherlands assisted were from central and eastern Europe, including Ukraine.<sup>26</sup>

A common destination country for Ukrainian women is Greece. There the demand for women in prostitution is increasing, which creates the demand for trafficked women and makes it so profitable. According to one survey from 1991 to 1996, the “prostitutes clientele” increased by 60 percent and the number of “promiscuous sexual contacts” increased by 100 percent.<sup>27</sup>

*The prostitution market is demand driven. The demand comes from brothel, clubs or bars owners who pay the suppliers and put women to work. Above all, it comes from clients. Collapse of values and the view that with money one can buy everything, even the bodies of underage children, characterize the clients. During the 1990s, the clients’ preference for a young submissive, docile and obedient coloured woman changed. Now the choice is for a woman from Central and Eastern Europe: white, beautiful, educated, but poverty-stricken, so that she may comply with all their wishes.*<sup>28</sup>

According to the U.S. State Department, Greece has the worst record for trafficking women and lack of effort to combat trafficking of all the countries in the European Union.<sup>29</sup> In Greece in 1999, 57

<sup>24</sup> International Organization for Migration, “New IOM Figures on the Global Scale of Trafficking,” *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin*, No.23, April 2001.

<sup>25</sup> International Organization for Migration, “New IOM Figures on the Global Scale of Trafficking,” *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin*, No.23, April 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Gerben J. N. Bruinsma and Guus Meershoek, “Organized Crime and Trafficking in Women from Eastern Europe in the Netherlands,” in *Transnational Organized Crime, Special Issue: Illegal Immigration and Commercial Sex-The New Slave Trade* (Editor, Phil Williams), Frank Cass, Vol. 3, Number 4, Winter 1997, p. 108

<sup>27</sup> B. Lazarus, 1998 as cited in Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. State Department, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 Trafficking in Persons Report, July 2001, p. 86.

Ukrainian women were identified as victims of trafficking by police.<sup>30</sup> In 2000, there were 41 official cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation involving 125 victims. Of the 335 foreign women arrested, 56, the second highest number, were from Ukraine. As of early 2001, 36 Ukrainian victims or their families contacted the Ukrainian NGO La Strada for assistance in returning from Greece.<sup>31</sup> In one case when an arrest was made, the women involved were from Ukraine, Albania, Denmark, Russia, Lithuania, Nigeria, and Greece.<sup>32</sup>

Ukrainians operate as traffickers and pimps in destination countries. According to a police report, Ukrainians are among the top six nationalities of pimps operating in Greece.<sup>33</sup> In one case in Greece, a Greek man and Ukrainian woman, assisted by a Bulgarian woman and two Albanian men, were arrested for running a trafficking and prostitution ring. Two Bulgarian women were found captive and freed.<sup>34</sup>

The women trafficked to Greece are subjected to extreme violence, resulting in emotional and physical trauma.

*Prostitution in Greece ‘entails new heights of violence as well as degradation and exploitation of the prostitute.’ ... They are deprived of their human rights and freedoms, are forbidden to leave the places without permission, threatened by deportation, violence and humiliation if they ask the authorities for help. They may be locked into apartment or secret rooms in bars. The newcomers are under surveillance of a bodyguard and are obliged to give all their earnings to their pimps. Sometimes the methods used to constrain women into prostitution are reminiscent of the concentration camps of the nazi regime, ‘small dachaus’: There is a preparatory period of three months during which they are raped, beaten, and without adequate food and water. A great number of the women bear the marks of severe beatings.<sup>35</sup> ... 36% of the foreign prostitutes are characterised by clear loss of the sense of space – only 27% knew in which neighborhood of Athens they were, and 32% did not know where Athens is! With regard to the sense of time, 33% did not know what day of the week it was, 56% did not know the date (up to 8 days out) and 10% did not know the month. Some of them did not know the year.<sup>36</sup>*

Because of lack of services and police intervention, there are reports that there are only four ways for women to escape from a trafficking/prostitution ring: 1) become unprofitable to pimps because of emotional breakdown (as a result of trauma); 2) become unprofitable to pimps because of advanced stage of pregnancy; 3) be helped to escape by a client; and 4) death.<sup>37</sup> Suicides are sometimes

<sup>30</sup> Greek Police report, cited by Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Trafficking of Migrant Women for Forced Prostitution into Greece,” July 2001, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> “Prostitution arrests,” *Kathimerini*, 25 August 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> “Police break up international racket,” *Kathimerini*, 13 August 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Non-aligned Women’s Movement, Greece, 1999 as cited by Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 21.

reported in local newspapers.<sup>38</sup> When women do escape from pimps or traffickers, they find little assistance from the Ukrainian embassies. The Ukrainian consul said that they do not have the money to send victims home when they ask for assistance.<sup>39</sup>

In discussing trafficking most of the focus has been on destination countries outside the former Soviet Union. In fact, Russia is a destination country for women trafficked from Ukraine. Some of the Ukrainian women who went to Moscow have been killed or disappeared. In Russia, women are beaten and have to tolerate rude, abusive behavior from men. Often the women are unable to tolerate the prostitution and abuse. After a few months when their debts were repaid they are allowed to leave, but often, the criminals take the money they are earned. Usually, the women were happy to be allowed to go home, even without the money.

The Ukrainian trafficker-pimp who worked in central Moscow described the way women were controlled. She had a set of rules and a system of fines to economically punish the women who broke the rules.

*I was strict with the girls. They received fines of approximately \$50 for things such as being drunk, taking narcotics, taking men to the apartment, not keeping the apartment clean. I expelled some women. They only made problems. They brought men to the apartment, began taking drugs, and spent all their money on heroin. Some were not in good form. They didn't buy new clothes, had poor body shape, and were not interested in their job.... The women could refuse anal sex, but had to do everything else.*

One of the ways pimps control women in prostitution is by threatening them with exposure to family and friends. The former trafficker-pimp gave the researchers Polaroid pictures that had been taken of a girl that appears to be in her teens. She said:

*Most of the women's families don't know they are in prostitution. The women were often mean to each other. Sometimes the women would blackmail a girl they didn't like with photographs. They punished each other for bad behavior.*

The photographs show women humiliating a girl in which the victim could be recognized, but not the perpetrators. In one photograph, they have forced the woman to sit naked on the floor with a used sanitary napkin wrapped around her head. In the next photo someone is pressing the girl's face into the buttocks of another woman. In another, the girl is on her back on the floor with a naked woman pressing her crotch into the woman's face. In the last, the victim's face is being forced into a stream of urine from another woman. These photographs are used to coerce the girl into doing what the pimp wants, or risk having them sent to her family.

The former pimp was reluctant to talk about violence against the women. She tried to minimize it and shift the blame to the women.

*It was high risk for women to go with clients. There were cases in which a woman would go with one man and when they arrived at the hotel or apartment, there would be 7-8 men in the room. I had a special telephone that could determine who was calling. I instructed the girls that in situations like that to call me and I would call the police. ...Some of the women provoke the men by getting drunk and not behaving well, so the men will beat them. Some women were bought for group sex. A lot of men buy prostitutes and drugs.*

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<sup>38</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Trafficking of Migrant Women for Forced Prostitution into Greece," July 2001, p. 13.

When asked what happened to women if they were beaten, she said they were taken to the hospital, but only if they needed treatment.

### ***Organized Crime and Corruption in Destination Countries***

The transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking includes organized crime and corrupt officials in destination countries. In several destination countries for Ukrainian women, officials and police have been caught assisting traffickers. In Germany in 1996, the chief of the Special Commission for Organized Crime in Germany was convicted for helping women destined for brothels cross the border between Poland and Germany.<sup>40</sup> In Cyprus in 2001, the former immigration chief was found guilty of accepting bribes to issue work permits to foreign women who worked as strippers in clubs, some of whom were forced into prostitution.<sup>41</sup> In Greece, a number of high-ranking officials have been arrested for involvement in trafficking and prostitution rings. Government and police officials' professional organization acknowledge that police collaborate with trafficking networks in Greece.<sup>42</sup> To combat police corruption, an Internal Affairs Bureau was established in 1999. In its first annual report it stated that 146 charges were brought against 74 police officers, approximately one half of whom were involved in granting residence permits to undocumented migrants and prostitution rings.<sup>43</sup> In Athens, a former chief of police was charged in a case involving 30 brothels that housed women from countries of the former Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> In another case, a group known as the "meat machine" in Trikala and Karditsa, Greece, thought to have traded 1,200 foreign women for prostitution over a 10 year period, included police officials and someone from the prosecutor's office. The police provided protection for the clubs in exchange for sexual use of the women.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to assisting traffickers moving women into the destination country and protecting pimps and brothel owners from arrest, corrupt officials and police assist the pimps in recapturing women once they escape or are rescued from brothels. The officials involved in deporting women work in collaboration with organized crime groups to recapture women who have escaped or are being deported.<sup>46</sup> Sending countries, such as Ukraine, are often poor and do not have enough resources to pay for airfares for the victims to return home. Instead, the women are given bus or train tickets. When these types of ground transportation are used, there have been cases of organized crime gang members intercepting them and returning them to prostitution. A Ukrainian woman deported from Greece was kidnapped, along with six other women, from the first train station in Bulgaria by the "Bulgarian mafia."<sup>47</sup> According to one source, 80 percent of women who are deported by train are

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<sup>40</sup> Marius Dragomir, "Some Eastern European women searching for better lives discover the evils of human trafficking," *Transitions Online*, 15 February 2001.

<sup>41</sup> "Immigration chief in stripper racket," *Kathimerini*, 31 October 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 19.

<sup>43</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> "Charges against former police chief; Retired officer is tied to prostitution racket," *Kathimerini*, 19 April 2000.

<sup>45</sup> "Probe into huge prostitution racket," *Kathimerini*, 6 December 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup> Fotini Kalliri, "The chronicle of shame," *Kathimerini*, 27 December 2001.

returned to Greece within 48 hours.<sup>48</sup> Women are forced back into prostitution in the same country or sold to traffickers/pimps in other countries.

The former Ukrainian trafficker-pimp who worked in Moscow was part of an organized crime group. She described how prostitution was organized in central Moscow and its reliance on corrupt officials and police protection:

*I paid \$6000 a month to the chief pimp in central Moscow. She paid money to the police. The chief pimp in central Moscow controlled 40 pimps. Each pimp had 7-20 women. They worked near the big hotels. The police gave the chief pimp protection. ... If you didn't cooperate with the pimps, you would have no clients. They would interfere with your moneymaking. You would be removed from central Moscow.*

The trafficking of women for prostitution relies extensively on corrupt police and officials. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to move so many women across borders and abuse and exploit them in so many public establishments without the cooperation of the police and/or officials.

### ***Political Components of the Transnational Political Criminal Nexus***

The political components of the transnational political criminal nexus carry out their role by 1) supporting the creation, growth, and “voice” of anti-trafficking NGOs that support the views of the destination countries, and 2) changing laws and policies so that the flow of women from sending countries, like Ukraine, to the sex industries in destination countries is legitimized and legalized.

### ***Governments of Destination Countries***

The demand for women to be used in prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation in destination countries is the driving force behind trafficking. Governments of most destination countries consistently act, either overtly or covertly, to protect their sex industries.

In the Netherlands, a major destination country in Western Europe, there are 2000 brothels and numerous escort services, using an estimated 30,000 women.<sup>49 50</sup> Not enough local or EU women can be recruited; therefore, 60 to 70 percent of the women in prostitution in the Netherlands are from outside the EU.<sup>51 52</sup> A high percentage of these women are trafficked women. According to one study, 79 percent of women in prostitution gave an indication that they were in prostitution due to some degree of force.<sup>53</sup> From 1997 to 2000, the national police of the Netherlands (KLPD) reported that

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<sup>48</sup> G. Marnelou, “The routes of prostitution,” *Eleftherotypia* 23, Nov. 1999, as cited in Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 20.

<sup>49</sup> Jason Bennetto, “Licensed brothels created problems for Dutch officials,” *The Independent*, 9 April 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Netherlands, “Report to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women),” July 2000.

<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Daley, “New rights for Dutch prostitutes, but no gain,” *New York Times*, 12 August 2001.

<sup>52</sup> *HP-De Tijd*, 16 February 2001.

<sup>53</sup> The Dutch Institute of Social Sexological Research, cited in The Netherlands Report to CEDAW, July 2000, p. 226-227.

there were 1350 traffickers operating in the Netherlands. They earned 118 million Euros, while 65 percent of the trafficked women earned no money at all.<sup>54</sup>

The Netherlands legalized brothels and pimping in October 2000. According to research in Groningen, the Netherlands, conducted between January 2001 and July 2002, legalization of brothels and pimping has increased the trafficking of women to this city because pimps are dispersing the illegal women to circuits, escort services, and private houses outside the areas of regulated “window prostitution.”<sup>55</sup> The trafficked women do not have EU passports, and can no longer work in the legal, regulated brothels. Many trafficked women are now in street prostitution in an area known as the “tippelzone.”<sup>56</sup>

In the Netherlands, prostitution and related forms of sexual exploitation are a US\$1 billion a year industry making up five percent of the Dutch economy. According to a Netherlands’ government report distributed at a trafficking in women conference in Kyiv, Ukraine:

*“In the last thirty years, prostitution in The Netherlands has tripled in size and economic importance en [sic] has become a relative open and integrated segment of society.”<sup>57</sup>*

The Netherlands has taken a lead role in normalizing the prostitution of women and indicating that it will create a legal apparatus to maintain the flow of women from Ukraine, and other sending countries, to its brothels.

The legalization of brothels and pimping put the Netherlands in violation of United Nations Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of which it is a signer.<sup>58</sup> In its 2000 compliance report to the CEDAW committee, the government defended the legalization of prostitution and criticized the Convention. The report states “prostitution is in and of itself no problem and can’t be regarded as a form of violence against women.” The Netherlands criticized CEDAW for regarding prostituted women as victims and added that the government of the Netherlands has now rejected that view.<sup>59</sup> Further, the report states “exploitation of prostitution [pimping] is also not considered a problem by the government as long as no force is involved.”<sup>60</sup> The Netherlands challenged CEDAW’s prohibition of the exploitation of prostitution by saying there was

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<sup>54</sup> Esther van Dijk, “Trafficking in the Netherlands: 1997-2000,” September 2002, Accessed at <http://212.19.195.8/npi/Persberichten/bestanden/220-2002MensenhandelinNederland.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> “More trafficking in women since lifting of brothel ban,” *Reformatisch Dagblad*, 22 August 2002 (translation by Semira Dallali).

<sup>56</sup> “Tippelzone comes apart at the seams: Street news from the Hague,” *Bas Kromhout*, September 2002 (translation Semira Dallali).

<sup>57</sup> “Country Report of The Netherlands on Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children” distributed at *US-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children*, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>58</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was passed in 1979. Article 6 obligates state parties to “take all measures, including legislation, to suppress the trafficking of women and the exploitation of prostitution of women.” The Netherlands is a signer of CEDAW and makes regular reports on its compliance.

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Netherlands, “Report to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women),” July 2000, p. 215.

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Netherlands, “Report to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women),” July 2000, p. 212.

a need to distinguish between “good” and “bad” exploitation, claiming that the Convention is not clear which type of exploitation is prohibited.

With the Netherlands government defending “good exploitation,” it could then move on to how it was going to legally maintain the flow of foreign women to its brothels. In Kyiv, Ukraine, at a conference on trafficking in women, a representative of the Netherlands defended the demand for and exploitation of women in prostitution. “The demand is already there. We can’t eradicate the demand. We will regulate it. Grant permits. Make them pay taxes.”<sup>61</sup> To get around the lack of a local supply of women for the brothels, he explained that the flow of women from sending countries could be legalized: “EU citizens can work there legally. Other countries may have women with working skills that will benefit the Netherlands. We could create special permits that will allow foreign nationals to engage in prostitution.”<sup>62</sup>

Several proposals have already been made on how to legally maintain the flow of foreign women to the brothels. One suggestion is that non-European Union women will get special permits to work in the sex industry in the Netherlands “like seasonal workers and IT-specialists.”<sup>63</sup> Some suggest that the market of the sex industry should be allowed to determine the demand and that work permits be issued based on the demand.

*The implicit demand that the state issues legal work permits to foreign prostitutes would mean that ‘the market’ decided on job vacancies and that there are no reasons to question the logic of the consumer market. If the consumer decides and if there is a free labour market then consequently labour can fulfil the demands in the market. ... this led to the suggestion to the Ministry of Justice to honour market demands and find a quota system as the Dutch prostitution market demands a variety of “bodies.”*<sup>64</sup>

Already agents have offered to assist in fulfilling the demand through a quota of work permits. Hans Scholtes, Director of Mr A de Graafstichting, an organization that claims it supports the rights of prostitutes in the Netherlands, said, “There is a huge demand for foreign women.” He has offered to create an agency that mediates between pimps and foreign women.<sup>65</sup>

Another destination country for Ukrainian women is Germany. In December 2001, Germany legalized brothels and pimping.<sup>66</sup> Currently, there are 400,000 women in prostitution in Germany.<sup>67</sup> Seventy-five percent of them are foreign nationals.<sup>68</sup> Eighty percent of the trafficked women in

<sup>61</sup> Carel Hofstra, 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary, Netherlands Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine, *US-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children*, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>62</sup> Carel Hofstra, 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary, Netherlands Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine, *US-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children*, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>63</sup> Ralf Bodelier, “Outlawed Women,” *De Volkskrant*, 20 October 2001 (translated by Semira Dallali).

<sup>64</sup> Gisela Dutting, “Legalized prostitution in the Netherlands—Recent Debates,” *Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights*, Newsletter 71.

<sup>65</sup> *HP-De Tijd*, 16 February 2001 (translated by Semira Dallali).

<sup>66</sup> Rob Broomby, “German prostitutes get new rights,” *BBC News*, 20 December 2001.

<sup>67</sup> Irena Omelaniuk and Ginette Baerten, “Trafficking in women from Central and Eastern Europe - Focus on Germany,” in *Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1999 Review*. (Vienna: International Organization for Migration and International Center for Migration Policy Development, March 1999).

<sup>68</sup> International Organization for Migration, “Trafficking of Women to the European Union: Characteristic, Trends and Policy Issues,” *European Conference on Trafficking in Women*, June 1996.

Germany are from Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>69</sup> The Women and Families Ministry estimates that the women in prostitution make US\$4.5 billion per year for the bars, clubs, and brothels.<sup>70</sup> In 1993, there were 517 cases of illegal sex slave trade; in 1996, the number was 1,094.<sup>71</sup> The increase in the number of cases represents an increase in police action against trafficking as well as an increase in trafficking.

Although the Netherlands has taken a lead in normalizing and legalizing the flow of foreign women into its sex industries, other influential destination countries, such as Germany and the United States, are supporting this shift from abolishing trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution to only opposing the overt violence and criminality and redefining and legalizing the remainder. A set of recommendations from a policy forum convened by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) at the U.S. State Department in August 2000 supported this trend to redefine prostitution as a form of labor and change migration laws to allow a flow of women for prostitution from Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>72</sup> Under the guise of “putting an end to the trafficking of women in the NIS and CEE,” the demand for women in destination countries was legitimized: “Migrating sex workers are simply responding to a demand for their labor.”<sup>73</sup> Legalization of prostitution was supported as a solution to the multiple forms of violence inherent in trafficking and prostitution: “Thus, some believe decriminalizing sex work may reduce the vulnerability of women employed in such work.”<sup>74</sup> These recommendations from policy makers and governmental bodies in destination countries are made without the support, or even awareness, of the majority of people in sending countries, like Ukraine. These types of changes will result in traffickers, although called by another name, being able to maintain the flow of women from sending countries to the brothels of the destination countries.

### ***The Corruption of Civil Society***

The linkage between the governments of destination countries and NGOs in sending countries makes up a component of the transnational political criminal nexus. As discussed above, destination countries have a stake in protecting their sex industries and maintaining the flow of women from sending countries. One way of promoting their interests is to fund NGOs in sending countries that promote the destination country’s point of view on prostitution and trafficking. It is not in the interests of governments that overtly or covertly protect their sex industries to give money to NGOs that oppose the flow of tens of thousands women to their brothels, or give a voice to groups who speak out against the abuse and exploitation of women.

As a leader in legalization of the sex industry, the Netherlands saw an advantage to funding NGOs in sending countries that will warn potential victims about the worst criminals, provide an infrastructure

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<sup>69</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign*.

<sup>70</sup> Rob Broomby, “German prostitutes get new rights,” *BBC News*, 20 December 2001.

<sup>71</sup> The German Family Ministry in “German police swoop on suspected sex slavery ring,” *Reuters*; 19 March 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Melanie H. Ram, “Putting an End to the Trafficking of Women in the NIS and CEE,” International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), 16 August 2000.

<sup>73</sup> Melanie H. Ram, “Putting an End to the Trafficking of Women in the NIS and CEE,” International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), 16 August 2000, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Melanie H. Ram, “Putting an End to the Trafficking of Women in the NIS and CEE,” International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), 16 August 2000, p. 4.

for returning the victims, and promote the interests of the Netherlands' sex industry.<sup>75</sup> The Netherlands' sex industry is best served by finding alternative ways to maintain their source of women that excludes the organized crime groups, and diverts the profits of trafficking to legitimate agents. According to the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Netherlands:

*We must communicate over ways of warning potential victims and of the alternatives they can be offered. But also on how to restrict and 'cream off' the profits generated by human trafficking and on how to increase the risks taken by perpetrators.*<sup>76</sup>

At a conference on trafficking of women in Ukraine, the representative of the Netherlands told the audience about the role his government is playing in funding NGOs. "The Netherlands was the first to provide funding to NGOs...the Netherlands provides 80 percent of the funding for La Strada-Ukraine."<sup>77</sup> The Netherlands country report states, "The NGO 'La Strada' has an important role to fulfill in raising awareness among possible victims in Eastern Europe..." The Netherlands funds Stichting tegen Vrouwenhandel (Foundation Against Trafficking in Women) to build a network of NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe:

*[T]he Foundation Against Trafficking in Women...works closely with the la Strada programme...comprising a number of NGO's in Central and Eastern Europe, works towards making the issue of trafficking in women visible and, from a human rights perspective, bringing the problem to the attention of the public and governments involved. The la Strada projects also work towards prevention by providing information and organising activities to return victims to their country of origin. La Strada projects have been set up in Poland, the Czech Republic, the Ukraine and Bulgaria. The staff of these projects meet regularly to exchange experiences. They also train the staff of NGOs in this field in other Central and Eastern European countries.*<sup>78</sup>

These NGOs do important, needed work on prevention and awareness of trafficking and assisting victims to return home. Unfortunately, in setting their policies on prostitution and trafficking, these well-funded NGOs do not consult Ukrainian women or citizens in general, but adopt the positions of their funders. For example, in September 1998, in a televised debate on prostitution, La Strada-Ukraine promoted the legalization of prostitution against DANA, a less well-funded grassroots Ukrainian NGO, which opposed that view.<sup>79</sup>

As discussed earlier, prostitution has not been a legitimate form of work in the Soviet era, or before that. Prohibition of prostitution has been the policy in this region for 100s of years. Even though the general public recognizes the economic hardship and high unemployment, there is no indication that

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<sup>75</sup> "Country Report of The Netherlands on Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children" distributed at US-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>76</sup> Monika Smit, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, "Combating the Trafficking of Human Beings, Report from the Netherlands," UN ODCCP Web site, 2000.

<sup>77</sup> Carel Hofstra, 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary, Netherlands Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine, US-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>78</sup> Monika Smit, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, "Combating the Trafficking of Human Beings, Report from the Netherlands," UN ODCCP Web site, 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Tatyana Travina, Vice-President, DANA, Email from Elena Kabashnaya, "Ukrainian La Strada speaks for legalization of prostitution in Ukraine," 26 September 1998.

people in general have changed their view that prostitution is harmful for women, men, or society.<sup>80</sup> The majority of Ukrainians, and people from other sending countries, oppose the flow of women to the sex industries in destination countries.

Surveys on the public's awareness and views on trafficking and prostitution abroad, particularly of women and girls, reveals a very different attitude than that promoted by NGOs funded by destination countries. In Ukraine, a survey of the general public revealed polarized attitudes towards women in prostitution abroad.<sup>81</sup> Eighty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that they were aware of trafficking in women from Ukraine. Twelve percent said that there was no trafficking in women because the women chose to go abroad. Concerning their attitude toward the women, 78 percent said that the woman was the victim of a crime who required assistance. The remaining 22 percent said that the woman is immoral, and had no sympathy for her if she is victimized. None of the respondents thought trafficking and prostitution abroad was a form of work. There is a stigma against women who are in, or have been in, prostitution. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said they would not maintain contact with a daughter if they knew she was in prostitution.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a survey of 1,189 women and girls, aged 15 to 35, in ten urban regions of Ukraine. Although many young women are eager to travel abroad to seek jobs, prostitution was viewed as absolutely unacceptable. When asked if "a job in the sex industry" was an "acceptable job abroad," none of the women and girls in any age group (Ages 15-17, 18-19, 20-24, 25-35) said yes. None of the women in age categories from 18-35 thought being a "dancer" or "stripper" was an "acceptable job abroad." However, all of the girls, aged 15-17, indicated that it was.<sup>82</sup>

Grassroots NGOs that represent these views of the citizens on prostitution and trafficking do not have the resources and access to conferences and policy forums that destination countries give the NGOs that represent their views.

In 1999 at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations and World Movement of Mothers called for governments to work toward suppressing the trafficking of women and girls by implementing the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.<sup>83</sup> The convention states: "prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of

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<sup>80</sup> Svetlana Iliina and I. Kalugin, "The Russian customers of sex service's attitudes towards prostitution and violence," *Unpublished manuscript* (Copy on file with the authors)

<sup>81</sup> Three hundred and fifty-nine people were surveyed in six regional cities: Zaporizhia (100), Lvov (100), Kharkov (60), Chernigov (59), Kherson (20), and Donetsk (20). Respondents were a cross section of the population, including employees at private firms and state offices, teachers, accountants, pensioners, students, health care workers, laborers, prisoners and unemployed.

<sup>82</sup> International Organization for Migration, "Slavic women trafficked into slavery," *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, June 1998).

<sup>83</sup> "Statement submitted by the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations and World Movement of Mothers, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council," Commission on the Status of Women, Forty-second session, 2-13 March 1999. The statement was also signed by Zona International, the National Council on Family Relations, the International Union of Family Organizations, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the International Health Awareness Network, the International Federation on Ageing, World Information Transfer, the International Alliance on Women, and the Global Alliance for Women's Health.

prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and endanger the welfare of the individual, the family and the community.”<sup>84</sup> The 1949 Convention explicitly prohibits the exploitation of prostitution (pimping). Ukraine has signed and ratified the 1949 Convention.<sup>85</sup> In contrast to this position, La Strada-Ukraine has publicly criticized the 1949 Convention in a world forum as being against the needs and rights of Ukrainian women.<sup>86</sup> La Strada-Ukraine has also blocked conference resolutions that criticize the sex industries or state that prostitution is harmful to women.<sup>87</sup>

Corruption occurs when someone in a position of authority or influences uses their power to benefit themselves and other parties rather than the ones they are empowered to represent. Corruption thrives in environments where civil society is weak and the public institutions, in this case NGOs, are not accountable to their constituencies. When NGOs in sending countries work to benefit destination countries rather than the women of their country, that is the corruption of civil society. In a democratic society, when there is police and official corruption, the problem can be countered by a vigorous, empowered civil society that speaks out against corruption through the ballot box, the free press, or public demonstrations.<sup>88</sup> Yet, in Ukraine high-ranking politicians are able to withstand scandals that connect them to the murder of a journalist that wrote about official corruption. This indicates the current high level of official corruption and the weakness of civil society.<sup>89</sup> Civil society is further undermined and remains powerless to protest the trafficking of women when the largest, most well funded NGOs are not representing the best interests of the women of Ukraine.

## Conclusion

In 2000, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Yuriy Kravchenko, said “Ukraine should not be viewed as a source country for women in the sex industry.”<sup>90</sup> After a decade of unimpeded trafficking in women, there is little to indicate that the traffickers and pimps see Ukraine as anything other than a source country for women. With the exception of Sweden, the destination countries show few signs of slowing the demand for women for their sex industries.<sup>91</sup> In fact, the trend toward legalization of brothels and pimping will further increase the demand for women. One destination country has already stated its intention to procure the much-in-demand foreign women using work permits. This

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<sup>84</sup> Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, <http://www.uri.edu/dignity/49conven.htm>

<sup>85</sup> Status of Ratification, Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, [http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/final/ts2/newfiles/past\\_boo/vii\\_boo/vii\\_boo/vii11.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/final/ts2/newfiles/past_boo/vii_boo/vii_boo/vii11.html)

<sup>86</sup> Kateryna Levchenko, *Women’s World Forum Against Violence*, Valencia, Spain, 23 November 2000.

<sup>87</sup> Kateryna Levchenko, *Women’s World Forum Against Violence*, Valencia, Spain, 23 November 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Joel Hellman and Daniel Kaufmann, “Confronting the challenge of state capture in transition economies,” *Finance and Development-A Quarterly Magazine of the IMF*, Vol 38, No. 3, September 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Vanessa von Struensee, “Ukraine at ten: Freedom of expression goes from dismal to dangerous,” *The American Association for Ukrainian Studies*, 2002, <http://www.ukrainianstudies.org/ukraineat10.htm#Vonstruensee>

<sup>90</sup> Presentation at *U.S.-Ukraine Regional Law Enforcement Workshop Against Trafficking in Women and Children*, Kyiv, Ukraine, 21-23 June 2000.

<sup>91</sup> In 1999, Sweden introduced a new law that criminalizes the buying of sexual services. <http://www.kvinnofrid.gov.se/regeringen/faktaeng.htm>

trend from abolition to regulation of the flow of women is a tribute to the power of the transnational political criminal nexus.

Organized crime networks are a component of this nexus. They engage in the merciless violence of the daily trafficking of women into prostitution. The corrupt officials and police in Ukraine and the destination countries are no less cruel in their collaboration with the criminals by supply authentic documents, ignoring the criminal activity, and assisting in the control of the women. The governments of the destination countries are often open and unapologetic about their demand for foreign women and their intention to legalize the flow of women from sending countries. The vast majority of people in Ukraine oppose the sexual abuse and exploitation of the women and girls of Ukraine. A number of NGOs, charities, and church groups have advocated for policies and laws that will prevent the recruitment and movement of women into sex industries, but their views are less well known and seldom represented in international conferences or forums on trafficking. The transnational political criminal nexus has successfully corrupted civil society as well. The political component of the nexus has supplanted the grassroots voices of civil society of Ukraine with the voices of the destination countries. Even though no survey indicates that women or people in general support prostitution as work for women, NGOs, like La Strada, lobby for the “rights” of women to go abroad for prostitution.

At this point, the destination countries that create the demand for women in prostitution to a great extent control the policies and debate about how trafficking will be addressed. Sending countries are usually poorer, less powerful, and under the influence of corrupt officials and organized crime groups. They lack the power and/or the political will to insist that destination countries stop their demand for women for prostitution.

The end of Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine offered great promise for freedom and democracy. Unfortunately, criminals and corrupt officials have stolen those opportunities from the people, and civil society is yet too under developed to force change from within. The leader of La Strada-Ukraine, Kateryna Levchenko, said that trafficking in women from Ukraine was “our payment for democracy.”<sup>92</sup> But democracy cannot be purchased with criminal activity and corruption that victimizes tens of thousands of women and children. The trafficking of women for prostitution will not be eliminated until both sending and destination countries counter their portion of the political criminal nexus.

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<sup>92</sup> Kateryna Levchenko, World Women’s Forum Against Violence, Queen Sofia Center Against Violence, Valencia, Spain, 23 November 2000.