



MiraMed Institute

Preliminary Survey Report on Sexual Trafficking in the CIS

June, 1999



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Participating Regions

Abakhan
 Baku
 Barnaul
 Blagoveshchensk
 Chelyabinsk
 Ekaterinburg
 Irkutsk
 Izhevsk
 Kaluga
 Kemerovo
 Kazan
 Kiev
 Kostroma
 Krasnodar
 Krasnoyarsk
 Kursk
 Moscow
 Moscow Region
 Nalchik
 Nizhni Novgorod
 Nizhni Novgorod Region
 Novgorod
 Novgorod Region
 Novocherkask
 Novocherkask Region
 Novosibirsk
 Omsk
 Orel
 Perm
 Petrozavodsk
 Rostov-on-Don
 Samara
 Saratov
 Primorski Region
 St. Petersburg
 St. Petersburg Region
 Tbilisi
 Tomsk
 Tula
 Tver
 Ufa
 Uglich
 Ulan Baator
 Vladivostock
 Volgograd
 Voronezh
 Yakutsk
 Yaroslavl
 Yerevan

Speaking Out Against Sexual Trafficking in the Commonwealth of Independent States

In March and April of 1999, over 3000 men and women gathered at Soros University Internet Centers and cities, villages and settlements across the Russian Federation, former republics and Mongolia in order to learn more about combating violence and sexual trafficking. They viewed the UNIFEM/United Nations Worldwide Broadcast, "A World Free of Violence Against Women" and then, adding their voices to growing concern in the former Soviet Union about the burgeoning international sexual trafficking trade, they completed a specially designed Opinionnaire (R) "Violence and Sexual Trafficking Survey" created by MiraMed Institute and the Forum Foundation of Seattle, Washington.

The Opinionnaire was comprised of 50 multiple part questions and 15 demographics which addressed trafficking and violence against women and girls in communities, trust levels of local officials and policemen, the role of NGO's and personal experiences of violence and trafficking in families and communities.

All information was gathered anonymously and participants were free to express their views and opinions. The distribution of the "World Free of Violence Against Women Broadcast" and the Opinionnaire Survey were sponsored by UNIFEM (United Nations



Women from Yerevan,, Tbilisi, and Moscow complete Opinionnaire surveys

REGION	"YES"
European Russia	10%
Siberia	15%
Ural Region	28%
Far East	25%
Ukraine	7%
Armenia	32%
Azerbaijan	20%
Other	27%

Table 1: Response by region to questions asking if a family member or close friend had been a victim of sexual trafficking.

Development Fund for Women), USIA (United States Information Agency) and the Forum Foundation. Results of the survey will be presented to the Russian Federation Ministries of Health, Education and Labor and will be used by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), USIA and other international agencies in determining priorities for funding ongoing projects to prevent the trafficking of women from the

Commonwealth of Independent States. A multi-oblast media and public information campaign is currently planned to begin in the fall of 1999.



Saratov, Russia

Map of Participating Regions



Who Filled out Opinionnaires?

A total of over 3000 people filled out Opinionnaires in 39 regions of the Russian Federation, the Republics of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine and Mongolia. As of this writing, 2481 have been received in Seattle, Washington USA and 1391 have been processed.

This report represents a preliminary analysis of the first 1391 surveys received. Of those, 251 are men, and 1134 women with 6 not identified. 318 are 10 to 19 years of age, 494 are 20 to 29, 201 are 30 to 39, 187 are 40 to 49, 122 are 50 to 59, 54 are 60 to 79, 9 are 70 to 79 years old. 38 live in villages, 41 in towns less than 10,000, 61 in towns of 10,000 to 30,000, 73 in towns of 30,001 to 100,000, 291 in cities of 100,001 to 300,000, 416 in cities of 300,001 to 1,000,000 and 455 in cities of more than 1,000,000 popula-



Participants in Ural Region

tion. Of the participants, 990 earn less than \$50 per month, 224 earn \$100 or less, 43 earn \$150 or less, 11 earn 200 or less, 20 earn \$500 or less, 9 earn \$1000 or less and 26 earn more than \$1,000 per month.

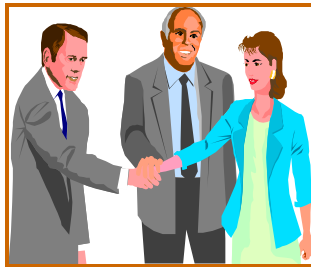
In depth studies of final results will be conducted at the University of Washington, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and American University and will be distributed on the internet via the Anti-trafficking Coalition Web Site which will be posted in Russian on the world wide web in the fall of 1999.

This first electronic Opinionnaire will also be used to design subsequent studies that will give international and CIS organizations regional and demographic data from which they can develop and support anti-trafficking initiatives.

A Perspective on Trafficking from the Commonwealth of Independent States

According to the Global Survival Network, tens of thousands of Russian girls are coerced across the Russian border and sold into sexual slavery by organized crime each year. The Russian and republican central governments have shown little interest in dealing with this problem, delegating it instead to women's organizations. As a result, trafficking in women from the former Soviet Union has, by many estimates, exceeded trafficking of women from Asia.

Young women and girls from the former Soviet Union are uniquely vulnerable to a number of exploitative crimes. One of the most onerous is the coercion of tens of thousands across international borders with false promises of legitimate work resulting in enslavement and forced prostitution in over 50 countries around the world.



According to Global Survival Network, traffickers are adept at using legitimate businesses to recruit women to go abroad

International sexual trafficking is a relatively recent phenomenon in the CIS coinciding with Perestroika and the sudden opening of the regions to an onslaught of media, entertainment, and foreign goods, easing of restrictions on international travel and declining economy. To villagers viewing the world beyond their borders for the first time on television, it seemed a glittering place filled with hope and economic opportunity. Television programs imported from the United States like *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *Santa Barbara* and *Crime Story*, have topped the national ratings since their introduction in the early 1990's. Casinos and nightclubs seemed to sprout up overnight in every city, town

(Continued on page 4)

Who is Trafficking CIS Women?

According to the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) which was founded in the Netherlands in 1987, there has been a steady increase in the number of women trafficked from the former Soviet Bloc since 1989. Similar trends have been noted by the United Nations in other West European countries. STV data show that this traffic is mainly controlled by Eastern European and Russian criminal groups operating in the recruiting as well as in the "receiving" destination countries. These groups are highly organized, extremely violent, and often engaged in a variety of criminal activities.

Post-Soviet television news features daily broadcast programs showing the murdered and mutilated victims of mob violence in graphic detail. Even in village environments, local mafias operate violent rings of extortion, illegal liquor sales, drugs and prostitution. Unlike other criminal activities, however, trafficking is a highly sophisticated criminal

activity involving recruitment through legitimate registered businesses with advertising, visas, international travel and co-conspirators in the regional and foreign governments.

Many women are recruited through a series of events, interviews, photosessions -- a complex process of deception which plays on their desires to find good work, to travel abroad and to help their families. Families often help with the process. However, what appears to be a legitimate business activity is often a front for traffickers. With no information to make them suspect the truth, and with a relative media blackout on the subject of trafficking, girls and their families become eager and unwitting victims of traffickers who promise good paying, legitimate work overseas. Once over the border, women's passports are confiscated and they are forced to work as prostitutes in sexual slavery.



Advertising Sex Tourism in Russia

(Continued from page 3)

and village. While some former Soviets adapted quickly to their new economic and social freedom and were successful, many others, eager to profit from the wealth they saw around them but had never experienced themselves, were easy victims for “get rich quick” schemes. Thousands of urbane Moscovites, for example, lost millions of rubles, lining up to invest their savings in an infamous MMM “pyramid” scheme even after it had been exposed as a fraud by the Russian government and its perpetrators were sitting in jail.

By the early 1990’s, even as the heady era of “get rich quick” schemes and dazzling images of an easy and prosperous life just across the border were reaching ever deeper into the rural fabric of Russian life, a new reality struck home: The collapse of Communism had led to a collapse of the internal economy, and the social support system. Widespread corruption fueled this “boom or bust” atmosphere as average citizens struggled make ends meet. Hundreds of unregulated banks, seeing an opportunity to make millions speculating on an inherently weak currency, offered unsuspecting citi-

zens spectacular interest rates. As a result, millions saw their savings evaporate when many of these “banks” literally folded overnight. Unable to support its currency, the government devalued the ruble and fell behind in payments to government supported institutions such as

	Disagree/Strongly	Agree/Strongly Agree
European	27%/11%	13%/2%
Siberia	35%/11%	7%/2%
Ural Region	23%/3%	11%/5%
Far East	33%/0%	17%/0%
Georgia	33%/33%	0%/0%
Ukraine	36%/7%	11%/11%
Armenia	28%/6%	8%/2%
Azerbaijan	27%/27%	3%/0%
Trans-	0%/50%	0%/0%
Other Regions	18%/9%	29%/3%

Table 2: Participants were asked to agree or disagree to the statement, “Most police officers are honest.”

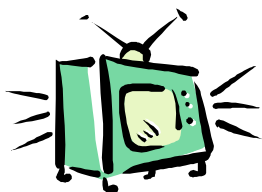
hospitals, schools, orphanages and government supported industries. However flawed, the Soviet system had for decades provided pensions, health care, education for all citizens day care and hundreds of other benefits which made life possible for students, pensioners and people at the lowest end of the government pay scale -- usually women. These benefits included free education, free bus and metro passes, free day care, reduced train and plane fares and reduced prices for consumer goods in special co-operative stores. Today, most of these benefits have been abolished. Faced with economic impoverishment and decreasing access to educational and job opportunities in Russia; bombarded on television with

the glittering media image of easy money and an easy life just across the border, young women are easy prey for sexual traffickers who make false promises of a wonderful life in a foreign land.

Sources of Information About Sexual Trafficking

When asked about sources of knowledge about sexual trafficking, 38% indicated they had heard radio programs about trafficking and 68% indicated they had watched a TV program about trafficking. Younger people were less likely to have heard or seen programs about trafficking. More people heard about trafficking on radio and TV in the CIS than in European Russia and more people in the republics knew someone who had been trafficked than in European Russia. Overall, 10% of all people surveyed reported that they had a relative or close friend who had been trafficked. People living in cities of 100,000-300,000 were the least likely to hear or see programs about trafficking—22% and 33% compared to an average of 68% in villages and larger cities.

Summary: 7 out of 10 people have learned about trafficking from TV, but only 38% have listened to a radio program about the subject. This appears to confirm the results of a question regarding the “best way to



reach people” about trafficking—TV was the rated the first choice. Radio and television programs about trafficking were listened to by a higher percentage of older people (ages 30 plus) than younger people (ages 10-29). More people heard about trafficking on radio and television outside European Russia than inside. Only 10% of the people in European Russia knew someone who had been trafficked, compared to 7% to 32% in the regions. The Far East, Urals and Armenia were 25%, 23% and 32% respectively. Ukrainian respondents reported the lowest percentage of friends or acquaintances that had been trafficked—7% - which may be due to more active anti-trafficking campaigns in Ukraine.

Age	Radio	TV
	Yes	Yes
10-19	29%	63%
20-29	32%	64%
30-39	42%	75%
40-49	47%	78%
50-59	52%	78%
60-69	67%	63%
70-79	44%	78%
80 +	0%	50%

Table 3: Most important media sources of information by age

Survey Relates Economy to Trafficking

When asked which problems affecting women were of the greatest concern to participants, 54% rank poverty as the most important issue facing women. Poverty was ranked 5 times higher than crime and 3 times higher than health concerns. Poverty is also ranked as the most significant barrier to equal opportunity in all but two regions. People living in larger cities are more concerned with poverty than people living in villages and/or smaller cities. People over 40 feel unequal career opportunities are less of a barrier than people under 40.

When asked how many of the female participants would actively seek work abroad, 74% of those between the ages of 10 and 19 and 67% of women between the ages of 20 and 29 indicated that they would be interested in seeking foreign employment.

Women from the former republics, particularly Armenia (82%) and Azerbaijan (73%) responded



Teenage Participants from Yaroslavl

positively to this question. Migration in search of employment is identified by the International Organization of Labor as a major factor in the vulnerability of women to exploitative trafficking.

Summary: Poverty and the current economic depression are the number one issues affecting women— both young and old, village and city dwellers agree. People living in larger cities are even more concerned about poverty than those in villages and small cities. Unequal career opportunities are the second most important issue. Knowing this, traffickers use the lure of good paying jobs to

tempt young women over the border.

Education programs about the dangers of trafficking will need to address the economic crisis facing young women and girls.



Table 4. The most important problems affecting women, by region

	Poverty	Economic depression	Unequal career paths	Health	Crime	Domestic Violence	Armed conflict	Discrimination	Inadequate education
Euro. Russia	56%	43%	29%	19%	11%	6%	1%	6%	9%
Siberia	45%	49%	31%	24%	15%	10%	1%	2%	3%
Urals	52%	39%	29%	25%	11%	2%	5%	9%	16%
Far East	17%	25%	25%	42%	8%	0%	0%	17%	25%
Georgia	33%	67%	33%	33%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%
Ukraine	50%	11%	36%	18%	7%	0%	0%	11%	18%
Armenia	76%	56%	26%	12%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%
Azerbaijan	43%	17%	47%	0%	3%	7%	30%	13%	7%
Trans. Cauc.	50%	25%	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Other	32%	24%	15%	15%	6%	32%	6%	26%	21%
Totals	54%	42%	29%	19%	11%	7%	2%	7%	9%

How to Reach At-Risk Young Women and their Families

In July, August and September of 1998, the UNIFEM Violence Against Women Trust Fund sponsored a MiraMed Institute program of Direct Education and Coalition Building in Karelia, Novgorod, Yaroslavl, Nizhni Novgorod, Moscow and Lodeine Pole. NGO leaders, educators and students met in a series of workshops to determine means which could be used in their oblasts to effectively provide information to at-risk young women and their families. The media most highly rated in those workshops were included in this survey to determine which are most widely applicable to a broad range of Russian oblasts and former republics.

Television was chosen as the good/best choice of mainstream media for disseminating information on sexual trafficking by 78% of respondents. Radio was the good/best choice of 56%, newspaper articles were the good/best choice of 47%, bus posters the good/best choice of 41, newspaper ads were the good/best choice of 37% of respondents while school posters were the good/best choice of 36%.

Television was the most popular choice of all, with three times as many respondents voting television "best" compared to radio, which was the second choice. The choice of television as the "best" way to reach girls was consistent throughout the regions as well, with European Russia giving TV 74%

and outside Regions 76%. But radio, the second choice, was ranked slightly better than TV in 6 of the 9 regions in the "good" category.

Newspapers and Newspaper Ads received more "good" and "best" responses in regions outside European Russia. Again, this may be because fewer people own TV's in these regions. If this is true, advertising should be re-directed to newspapers to reflect this reality.

Bus posters, too, scored more "good" and "best" choices in areas outside European Russia, and in villages and cities of less than 30,000 people. The reason for this may be that in smaller cities and villages, buses are more primary modes of transportation.

Summary: Television and Radio are the clear first and second choices of all respondents. In European Russia and in larger cities (population of 300,000 to more than 1 million) television and radio was more preferred as first and second choices than in regions outside European Russia, and in small villages and cities.



The results of this Opinionnaire will shape the Media/Public Information program which is to be initiated in participating regions in the fall of 1999.

Table 5: Ranking Media Effectiveness by Profession

	TV	Radio	Newspaper	Ads	Bus	School
	<i>Good/Best</i>	<i>Good/Best</i>	<i>Good/Best</i>	<i>Good/Best</i>	<i>Good/Best</i>	<i>Good/Best</i>
Students	39%/33%	38%/ 7%	35%/5%	27%/4%	29%/ 5%	25%/ 3%
NGO's	50%/18%	40%/46%	47%/11%	39%/7%	43%/14%	35%/13%
Educators	50%/9%	43%/37%	39%/ 6%	32%/6%	38%/ 6%	35%/ 6%
Law Enforcement	60%/7%	40%/47%	53%/ 7%	43%/7%	50%/ 7%	53%/ 0%
Government	69%/ 0%	69%/19%	56%/ 0%	31%/ 0%	50%/ 0%	31%/ 0%
TOTAL	40%/36%	44%/10%	40%/7%	32%/5%	34%/7%	30%/6%

Using Electronic Communications to Combat Trafficking

In the survey section relating to the use of electronic media as a tool to combat sexual trafficking, 59% of respondents indicate that they have access to a computer, but 68-72% have never used one for e-mail or the internet and less than 25% own a computer. More people over 30 own computers than people under 30. The higher the income, the more likely a person is to own a computer. The vulnerable age range of 10-19 year olds own the fewest computers--just 15% and are the least familiar with e-mail and the internet. They also comprise the group with the highest interest in learning to use e-mail and the internet (93%).



little about trafficking. 69% of all respondents agree/strongly agree that e-mail/internet access will help their community learn more about combating sexual trafficking.

Summary: Although less than 25% of women respondents in the vulnerable age range of 10 to 29 years of age own a computer, more than 90% expressed a strong desire to learn electronic communications and 65% feel that e-mail

and the internet would help people learn more about combating sexual trafficking.

People who indicate that they have a high knowledge of trafficking use e-mail three times more than those who know

Table 6: Electronic Communications

	Computer access		Use e-mail		Use internet		Own computer		Desire to learn		Will it help combat sexual trafficking? Strongly/Agree
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
10-19 years	57%	41%	18%	81%	24%	74%	15%	75%	93%	5%	65%
20-29 years	57%	39%	28%	69%	30%	67%	20%	73%	91%	5%	67%
30-39 years	68%	30%	30%	69%	36%	63%	35%	63%	85%	10%	75%
40-49 years	65%	34%	35%	63%	34%	64%	32%	68%	80%	10%	76%
50-59 years	59%	37%	28%	69%	31%	65%	25%	72%	78%	11%	71%
60-69 years	33%	65%	9%	91%	13%	83%	9%	91%	65%	17%	59%

Quote from Participant in Yaroslavl Oblast

“One day last year a well dressed businesswoman came to Uglich in a Mercedes Benz. She told high school girls she met that she would take them to MacDonalds in Yaroslavl. They left with her in her car and we never saw them again.. And when the same lady came back this spring, she took more girls and they also disappeared. Our girls are too vulnerable.”



Internet Resources



United Nations Development Fund for Women

[Http://www.unifem.undp.org/index.htm](http://www.unifem.undp.org/index.htm)

International League for Human Rights

<http://www.ilhr.org/index.html>



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CITY	Very Willing	Probably Willing	Willing/Reluctant
Barnaul	30%	22%	15%
Ekaterinberg	19%	47%	19%
Irkutsk	18%	17%	39%
Izhevsk	20%	60%	20%
Kazan	0%	21%	7%
Kiev	19%	25%	6%
Kostroma	14%	46%	18%
Krasnodar	7%	0%	33%
Kursk	40%	44%	8%
Moscow	10%	54%	19%
Nizhni Novgorod	73%	13%	3%
Novgorod	42%	14%	48%
Novocherkask	20%	24%	15%
Novosibirsk	51%	49%	0%
Orel	19%	31%	14%
Perm	0%	0%	44%
Petrozavodsk	30%	13%	57%
Rostov-on-Don	40%	30%	7%
Samara	8%	34%	16%
Saratov	7%	27%	53%
Saratov	28%	66%	0%
St. Petersburg	51%	18%	39%
Tomsk	19%	34%	13%
Tula	3%	34%	24%
Tver	7%	60%	27%
Ufa	13%	57%	17%
Ulan Baator	30%	30%	22%
Yaroslavl	100%	0%	0%
Yerevan	10	15	25

Table 7: How willing are you to join an anti-trafficking coalition?

All-CIS Anti-Trafficking Coalition

When asked if they considered working against sexual trafficking to be dangerous to the NGO's involved, 62% of respondents indicated that they believed this to be true. 52% responded positively when asked if they agreed that trafficking was controlled by organized criminal groups. Still, 78% were willing to join an All-CIS Anti-Trafficking Coalition.

MiraMed Institute will be announcing the formation of an All-Cis Anti-Trafficking Coalition sponsored by a grant from the United States Agency. Addressing the threat of organized crime to the members of the coalition, MiraMed is creating a "virtual" office on the world wide web. The virtual office will be a website with information about trafficking programs and resources, chatrooms where organizations can speak with one another for free without the limitations of long-distance telephone charges. There will be bulletin boards



where members can ask questions of other members and share resources and information — including very specific information about the activities of sexual traffickers, what business names they are using, what techniques they apply, etc — all anonymously. No one will know the identities of the participating members except other members and only then if there is mutual agreement. All contact in the virtual office will be made using e-mail addresses that cannot be traced to a specific address or person leaving participants free to be completely open about sharing information. The web site virtual office will only be accessible to members who are given a special "index code." This "index code" can be applied for over the internet using only an e-mail address.

It is our hope that the anonymous basis of our virtual office will encourage trafficking victims to use the internet to find help for themselves, contact agencies who can help them get home and once home, find the support and rehabilitation services they need and deserve.