



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN MALTA

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest criminal activity in the world, following the international trade in illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN MALTA

No reliable data is available on the extent of trafficking of children in sexual exploitation in Malta. Similarly, Malta does not record a large number of children sexually exploited through prostitution. Most cases of sexual exploitation of children are related to the possession of child pornography.³

Who gets trafficked?

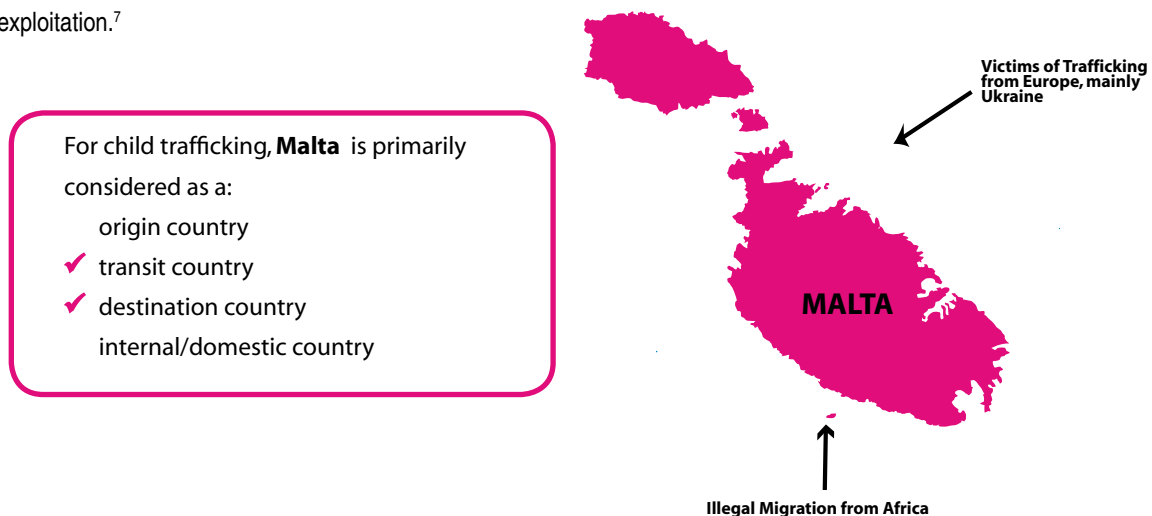
The demand for sex drives child sex trafficking globally, while poverty, domestic violence and abuse, discrimination and the desire for a better life makes children vulnerable. Children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked because they are often uneducated, easy to overpower and easy to convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children in refugee camps, children whose family and community life has been disrupted and do not have someone to look out for them are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking. Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived.

Young women recruited for prostitution from Eastern European countries are essentially 'purchased' by Maltese men, according to law enforcement agencies. Sometimes pimps intent on exploiting them for commercial sex act as intermediaries. These women can then often be 'sold' to other pimps or individuals who then continue the cycle; it is typical for trafficking victims to be 'sold' every three months under these practices.⁴ In many cases, these victims enter Malta legally on a tourist visa. In the case of victims of trafficking from Ukraine, various research points out that the majority of the victims are female and that trafficking occurs mainly for sexual exploitation.⁵

Countries are considered:

- 'Sending' or 'origin' - from where children are sent;
- 'Transit' - where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- 'Receiving' or 'destination' - where the children finally end up.

Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries might only be sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. Malta is primarily a destination country for women and children trafficked for sexual purposes from Eastern European countries such as Ukraine, Russia and Romania.⁶ Situated at the intersection of southern Europe and northern Africa, Malta has also been exposed to increasing transit flows of irregular migrants. Between 1,500 and 1,800 illegal immigrants from Africa arrive in Malta each year; it is unclear whether any are trafficked to or through Malta for sexual exploitation.⁷



Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married or single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

Although there are no official records of child trafficking for sexual exploitation in Malta, research has revealed a large incidence of child abuse. One survey found that out of more than 100 interviewees, 25% stated that they had been abused; 14 were males and 17 were females, while two did not specify their gender. Regarding the type of abuse, 19 of the 33 had suffered sexual abuse, six serious physical abuse and eight emotional abuse.⁸ Furthermore, during 2004, 27 cases of child pornography over the Internet came to the attention of the police. Of these, 13 resulted in court action (mainly for distribution and/or possession), with two cases involving the physical and sexual exploitation of minors.⁹

Who are the traffickers?

Maltese criminal groups are active in international trafficking in women for prostitution inside and outside Malta.¹⁰

CASE STUDIES

Romanian woman charged with human trafficking

On December 2006 a 22-year-old Romanian woman, Simona Ortansa Bostan, was charged with trafficking people under the age of 21 for prostitution. Residing in Malta, Ms. Bostan pleaded not guilty but was refused bail and was placed in preventative custody.¹¹

Malta lags in implementation of crime prevention measures

Malta has been named as the EU's most lagging State when it comes to the implementation of the Hague Programme action plan – encapsulating the EU's efforts in the fight against crime.¹² According to a scoreboard released by the European Commission in 2007, Malta is still to implement 35 per cent of the Hague Programme's measures. The legislative areas that have so far not been implemented by Malta range from measures related to child pornography and money laundering to the confiscation of the proceeds of crime and compensation for victims of crime. On the sensitive issue of child pornography, Malta is still to enshrine measures to combat the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography established in December 2003. Noting that child pornography is a particularly serious form of sexual exploitation of children that has been increasing and spreading through the use of new technologies and the Internet, the European Council has obliged member States to take necessary measures to ensure that a person convicted of such offences be temporarily or permanently prevented from exercising professional activities related to the supervision of children. Also lacking is a measure granting residence permits to victims of human trafficking who cooperate with the authorities. Malta has also neglected the obligation of air carriers to communicate passenger data, and the strengthening of the penal framework to prevent the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence in Member States.

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Systematic collection of data and information on trafficking in children for sexual purposes, followed by appropriate strategies to combat the issue, are needed. To date, records from the Police, social services and other institutions are not integrated.
- Training on the specificities of sexual exploitation and trafficking for police, prosecutors, judges, and other persons in contact with victims of cases concerning crimes against children. Capacity building should include modules on child victims' identification and child-friendly procedures during investigation, prosecution and the entire recovery process.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Malta	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Malta
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990	Initial report due in 1992, submitted in 1998	The Committee is concerned by the insufficient data and awareness of the phenomenon of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the State party, and by the absence of a comprehensive and integrated approach to preventing and combating this phenomenon. In light of article 34 and other related articles of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake a national study on the nature and extent of commercial sexual exploitation of children with a view to designing policies and programmes, including for care and rehabilitation, to prevent and combat this phenomenon. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account the recommendations formulated in the Agenda for Action adopted at the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm in 1996.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2002	Report due in 2004 but not yet submitted	n/a
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	2003	n/a	n/a
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2001	n/a	n/a

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Malta	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Malta
Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings	2008	n/a	n/a

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Campaigns to raise awareness should be carried out to inform the public about how recruitment to the sex industry is done. Furthermore, the legal implications of engaging in such acts should be widely communicated in Malta.
- Efforts to shape attitudes and opinions about child trafficking for sexual purposes should be made and continuously improved. This could be achieved through information campaigns that raise the issues of trafficking and procuring of minors.
- Improved cooperation is needed among advocates of child victims of violence, including social services, NGOs and women shelters working with victims in destination and source countries, so that victims can be followed up after their return and re-trafficking can be prevented, with the specific needs of minors addressed.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

Supportline 179 is a 24-hour free telephone service run by a team of professionally trained volunteers offered by Agenzija Appogg. It provides immediate, confidential support to callers of any age, who require assistance both in day-to-day and crisis situations. It also provides information on social welfare services and referral systems to those callers who require further assistance. Supportline 179 receives calls on situations of child abuse, domestic violence, and drug/alcohol/gambling problems, amongst others.

MORE INFORMATION

- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

- ¹ UNICEF. *UNICEF calls for increased efforts to prevent trafficking of children*. 16 June 2007. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html
- ² UNODC. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. 2009. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>
- ³ APPOG. *Missing and Sexually Exploited Children Malta Report*. 2006. Accessed from: http://www.appogg.gov.mt/pdf/information/missingchn_maltareport.pdf
- ⁴ Bureau of Democracy and Labour. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Malta*. 2005
- ⁵ United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. *Desk Review: Trafficking in minors for commercial sexual exploitation – Ukraine*. 2005
- ⁶ US Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. 2008.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ APPOG. *Missing and Sexually Exploited Children Malta Report*. 2006. Accessed from: http://www.appogg.gov.mt/pdf/information/missingchn_maltareport.pdf
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control. *Trafficking in women and children in Europe*. 2003.
- ¹¹ “Romanian woman charged with human trafficking”. *The Malta Independent Online*. 22 December 2006.
- ¹² “Malta lags implementation of crime, drugs and child pornography measures”. *The Malta Independent Online*. 9 July 2007. Accessed from: <http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=53963>



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