

Women of the Mountain: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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By: Sydney K

Thesis: A Modern Form of Slavery

A young woman is taken captive from her home; she has no idea where she's going or why. She arrives with other women to be sold to the highest bidder. She will become a slave, used for pleasure and work. Slavery was outlawed a long time ago and now we have nothing to worry about; sadly that statement is totally inaccurate. Many of us do not know that even today we face this ongoing problem. It's present in nearly every country, even the United States. It's amazing to think that slavery and indentured servitude is still in effect, although now illegal, it is scarcely enforced by many places in the world. The mistreatment of women and children has been ever present in the past and around the world however many don't recognize it. Human trafficking is evidence that people can still be considered chattel. For many in the destitute regions, this is the only way to preserve their lives. It has become virtually ignored in tier three regions of the world and runs rampant in many tier two, where government has next to no power to stop it. Russia is one of these countries. Exploitation in Russia is not uncommon by any means. It is the would be capital of organized crime in the eastern hemisphere, geographically it sits between prime trafficking areas. This begins a series of questions, Why is crime so severe in this area? What contributes to the ideology of the crime? Why does this still happen around the world? But most importantly, how does it influence women and children in the area? The focus on human trafficking and exploitation prevention should become a more important issue based on rights, political involvement, and the social effects on society. It's important to view human trafficking as its realistic, memorable and most basic form; slavery.

Part I: Social Ignorance

While it's true that money can't buy happiness, money plays a huge factor in life; money makes the world go round. The transition from destitution, to prostitution is a process women around the world make daily. Regions that live in poverty are prime areas for exploitation. For some, this is a chosen lifestyle; a necessary lifestyle. Destitute women and families have nowhere to turn to for financial support, and debts start to bury them. Many women turn to employers who promise a job and pay to get them out of financial trouble, but break their promise as soon as she signs. This similar to indentured servitude. "The U.S. estimates that 700,000 to 4 million women and children are trafficked around the world" (1) this staggering number is an estimation of only the direct victims of human trafficking. It would have a these numbers could be substantially reduced if people were aware and acted on human trafficking to prevent it. The stance against human trafficking would be greatly strengthened by international social awareness.

Part II: Politics Place

In addition to victimization, big business and criminal machines, or empires, are becoming boss monetarily. Trafficking and exploitation is a billion dollar industry; although lucrative and immoral, it pays well. The most common form of exploitation of women is in the form of debt. Without money, households cannot provide for their family; they work whatever job their kidnapper tells them to do and work off a substantially larger amount then what was paid for their kidnapping .It's a basic, successful business tactic that makes the business so popular. Destitution in regions like Russia is a major contributing factor of human trafficking

that can be alleviated by government influence. If the government would focus more on social reforms, it would play a huge part in the prevention of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a direct infringement of human rights. On an international level, these needs are being ignored. Government is indefinitely an important part of society that plays a powerful role in life. Instead of ignoring issues, it's important for political leaders to have a standing against problems such as exploitation.

“International agreements, for the most part, has provided the basis on which perpetrators can be prosecuted...The Nuremburg Trials, held after World War II in Germany to prosecute Nazis for war crimes, established rape as a crime against humanity. However, none of the defendants was prosecuted for the crime. The first real attempt to try men guilty of rape came during Tokyo War Crime Trials...Twenty-eight men were indicted for class A war crimes specifically promoting a method of conquest that included “mass murder, rape...and other barbaric cruelties”...Although crimes of sexual violence have been punishable under subsequent international codes...it was really only in the late 20th century that perpetrators were tried for war rape offenses.”(3)

If government took this long to react to these atrocities, it is unknown how long it will take to prevent human trafficking and exploitation. A more effective effort on government's part would affect the human trafficking tremendously. Acting immediately still won't be able to distill the effects; however it will prevent many of these horrible acts. Unless every country, on every continent makes this problem a priority, change will not happen. Government needs to focus more on social disturbances, and upheavals instead of burying them from the people.

Part III: The Exploited Ploy

Although the political aspect of human trafficking and exploitation is mainly attached to the violation of rights, the pain human trafficking would bring to a single person let alone an entire family is just as important to take into account. Human trafficking affects the people much deeper than their pockets. Looking at some possible long-term effects; long term abuse (physical and mental), exposure to disease, and drug addiction, there is still the psychological and emotional aspects of captivity. Research has shown some disturbing occurrences that involve children and young women who are or have been trafficking victims. “Specifically, studies of adults (8–10) and a more recent study of children have indicated that individuals who dissociate either during or soon after a trauma are at greater risk of developing PTSD.” (1) Victims of sexual abuse experience similar psychological symptoms as war veterans. It’s not uncommon for side effects to take place after a traumatic, life changing event.

“Deployment to a combat zone is undoubtedly an extremely stressful experience. It was hypothesized that, when faced with an impending wartime deployment, soldiers with prior combat experience would report minimal emotional problems accompanied by high rates of somatic complaints compared with combat-naive soldiers.”(2)

They are psychologically left with those memories and reminders of their past. More and more, human trafficking and exploitation is becoming accepted in societies unofficially controlled by organized crime in Russia. I think it’s important to recognize the aspects of human rights that are being violated through this process. To citizens in the U.S., these are the foundations of our country. If media attention and concern showed from other countries and government bodies, the situation would improve the political and social aspect of exploitation.

Part V: Conclusions

While it might be next to world peace, it is a very important problem we face all around the world today that is worth solving. While there is no sure fire way to stop this problem, it's important to make everyone aware of the situation and any prevention; I think that media attention and exposing this problem would add to the suppression of human trafficking and exploitation. If more people become involved and oppose organized crime, things will get better. Another way to alleviate the problem would be stricter regulation of trade and business laws that need to be enforced. As a tier two watch list in watching human trafficking, Russian government isn't meeting the minimum requirements to keep human trafficking at bay. If they could be more vigilant against this problem, it would help many women and children throughout Russia. I strongly believe that just becoming aware and taking notice of this problem will help to control problems internationally, and making a platform against human trafficking and exploitation.

Sources For Women of the Mountain

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