

# Human Trafficking Fact Sheet

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White House Press Releases and Documents

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## *Recent Developments in U.S. Government Efforts to End Human Trafficking*

**Human trafficking** denies hundreds of thousands of people their basic human rights, poses a serious public health risk, and fuels organized crime around the world. It is a dark and uncomfortable subject, but one that must be illuminated.

The United States has taken significant action to combat **trafficking** in persons, including **trafficking** for commercial sexual exploitation.

In April 2003, the PROTECT Act was signed into law by President Bush. This bill serves as a historic milestone for protecting children while severely punishing those who victimize young people. The PROTECT Act allows law enforcement officers to prosecute Americans who travel abroad to abuse minors, without having to prove prior intent to commit illicit crimes. This bill also makes clear there is no statute of limitations for crimes involving the abduction or physical or SEXUAL abuse of a child-in virtually all cases. The bill also strengthens laws punishing offenders who travel abroad to prey on children (“sex tourism”). These U.S. “tourists” are now subject to domestic child abuse/child exploitation laws even if their crimes are committed abroad, and they face up to 30 years imprisonment, from a previous maximum of 15 years.

In December 2003, President Bush reauthorized the **Trafficking** Victims Protection Act, which accelerates our global work against modern-day slavery in a number of ways:

Provides new tools for addressing destination countries that may be turning a blind eye to **trafficking**, especially the abuse of foreign women.

Makes convictions and sentencing of traffickers as important as arrests in evaluating country progress.

Requires better statistical monitoring, giving us access to critical law enforcement data related to **trafficking**.

Creates a Watch List of countries weakening their commitment to prosecute traffickers, prevent abuse, and protect victims.

President Bush has made the fight against slavery an American priority. In a September 2003 speech he made to the United Nations, President Bush called slavery, “A special

evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent...” He declared: “Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. Governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery.” The president committed \$50 million to support the global fight against **human trafficking**.

The U.S. is actively partnering with other nations to combat this transnational crime, providing assistance to **trafficking** victims and striving to highlight the dangers of sex tourism and **trafficking**. Nearly \$74 million in U.S. government funding was devoted to anti-**trafficking** activities worldwide in FY 2003.

Our progress is real, and the fight is occurring on many fronts:

After 15 countries were ranked in Tier 3 (the lowest category of a 1-3 scale) in the State Department’s annual **Trafficking** in Persons Report, 10 took swift action to combat **trafficking**: passing national anti-**trafficking** legislation, instituting law enforcement training, engaging in public education, and making arrests.

In FY02 and FY03, over \$54 M in assistance was provided to more than 70 countries to strengthen anti-**trafficking** law enforcement, victim support, legislation, and regional cooperation.

Tackling **trafficking** at home, the Justice Department has arrested eight U.S. citizens abroad for illegal sexual conduct with minors since May 2003. In FY 2001- 2003, 111 traffickers have been charged-nearly a three-fold increase compared to those charged in the previous three years. As of January 2004, the Criminal Section has 142 open **trafficking** investigations.

Sentencing expected in the largest anti-**trafficking** case in U.S. history: a Korean garment factory owner and two others were convicted in Hawaii of enslaving over 250 Vietnamese and Chinese workers in American Samoa.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) certified 491 victims of **trafficking** as of March 15, 2004, allowing them to receive services to the same extent as refugees.

HHS has implemented a public outreach campaign to boost awareness of assistance available to victims. The Rescue & Restore campaign is designed to increase the number of identified **trafficking** victims and to help those victims receive the benefits and services needed to live safely in the U.S. A critical component of the Rescue & Restore campaign is the creation of the **Trafficking** Information and Referral Hotline, 1.888.3737.888, which connects victims of **trafficking** to Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) who can help victims in their local area.

To learn more information about the Rescue and Restore campaign, please visit [www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking).

The Department of Labor has increased the focus worldwide on illegal child **trafficking** and work exploitation, dispersing nearly \$48M for this purpose in 27 countries.

Labor Secretary Chao recently traveled to Africa to meet victims of child **trafficking** and highlight new efforts to expose child labor.

The Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General completed two assessments of U.S. military compliance with the Administration's zero tolerance policy on activity that might fuel sex **trafficking** and prostitution in Korea and Bosnia/Kosovo. In early 2004, DoD issued a directive that outlines specific objectives, including anti-**trafficking** education requirements for all service members and DoD civilians.

New language is being adopted in DoD contracts for services overseas making **trafficking**-related prohibitions crystal clear.

The Department of Homeland Security launched Operation Predator last summer, a comprehensive effort to protect children from international sex tourists, traffickers, and prostitution rings using the full range of cyber, intelligence, investigative, and detention tools. Arrests have already been the result.

Partnering with World Vision and ECPAT, DHS is putting law enforcement muscle behind the best efforts of international NGOs.

The U.S. Agency for International Development implements anti-**trafficking** programs in over 40 countries supporting a wide range of anti-**trafficking** efforts including public education, victim protection through shelters and counseling, and legislative reform to strengthen prosecution of **trafficking** criminals.

The Central Intelligence Agency has collected and coded new information, compiling a database for the 2004 TIP report.

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