

Kosovo: women for sale

Women and girls are being trafficked from some of the poorest countries in Europe and forced to work as prostitutes in Kosovo. Many of the men who buy their services are working for the UN and other international organizations.

These young women and girls are subjected to repeated human rights violations. They are sold into slavery. They are threatened, beaten, raped and effectively imprisoned by their owners. They are often too afraid to escape and the authorities are failing to help them.

Women and girls are often sold several times in transit, for prices ranging from €50 to €3500.

The majority of trafficked women and girls have been forced to have unprotected sex; only 10 per cent receive regular health care.

Despite some positive measures by the authorities, trafficked women and girls are often still treated as criminals - prosecuted for being unlawfully in Kosovo, or charged with prostitution following raids by police.

International personnel from UNMIK (UN Interim Mission in Kosovo) and KFOR (NATO-led international military force) enjoy a general immunity from prosecution, unless explicitly waived by senior officials.

Trafficking of women and girls in Kosovo will never end as long as the perpetrators go free and as long as civilian and military personnel are allowed to commit human rights violations with impunity.

Trafficking is a widespread and pervasive form of violence against women.

"I was beaten and I was forced to have sexual intercourse ... if we were not willing, they just beat us and raped us."

Find out more: Trafficked women and girls have human rights

<http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/stories-9-eng>

Kosovo: Facts and figures on trafficking of women and girls for forced prostitution in Kosovo

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/engneur700132004>

Pakistan: A welcome ban on trial by jirga

The High Court of Sindh province issued a ban on trials by jirga on 23 April 2004. Jirgas, councils of male elders, have assumed quasi-judicial functions and passed judgments which have predominantly violated girls' and women's rights.

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/engasa3350072004>

Good news: Slovenia is to ratify Optional Protocol on the Women's Convention

After three years of campaigning by women NGOs and other organizations including AI, the Slovene parliament passed a law on ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/engneur6822042004>

UN Commission on Human Rights: Sexual rights are human rights

Sexual rights had unprecedented visibility at the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights – cutting across four resolutions and the focus of activism both globally and at the UN – but they have also come under sustained attack.

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/engpol300202004>

Swaziland ratifies international convention on women

On 26 March Swaziland ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) without reservations. AI welcomes this ratification. The government of Swaziland must now ensure its provisions are incorporated into national law and practice without delay. AI also urges the government to ratify the Optional protocol to CEDAW.

Take Action

Women in Rwanda: marked for death

Ten years on from the genocide and war of 1994, the women of Rwanda are still seeking redress for the violence done to them.

Royal seal of approval

Queen Rania signs up to the campaign.

Queen Rania of Jordan signs her name in support of the Stop Violence Against Women campaign in an event in Amman, Jordan attended by over 400 people.

<http://news.amnesty.org/mav/index/ENGACT770402004>

Mourning brides

Supporters mark launch of new report.

AI supporters in Sweden created "human installations" to mark the launch of AI Sweden's report on men's violence against women. Every fourth woman had black roses for a bouquet.

<http://www2.amnesty.se/svaw.nsf>

Amnesty International Report 2004

Amnesty International's annual survey documents human rights abuses in 155 countries around the world. It reports on areas of work being prioritized by Amnesty International, including violence against women. An essential reference tool for human rights activists.