

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

January 2011



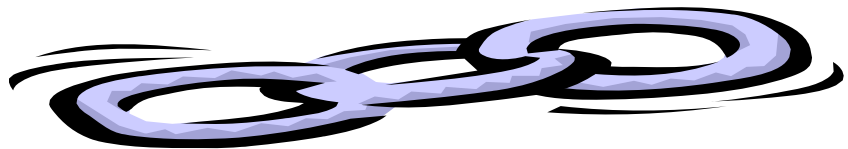
The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of



January 11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

As we commemorate National Human Trafficking Awareness Day we remember the 27 million women, children and men who are held in slavery throughout our world. These 27 million persons are members of families. Families where:

- a child might be sold;
 - parents, wanting a better life for their child, are duped into the promise of a better life;
 - a mother sells herself to provide for her children;
 - a father, when he becomes ill while working a fishing boat, is thrown overboard;
 - children work 18 hours a day to provide products for “wealthy” countries;
 - parents incur debt to be smuggling into another country to find work to provide for their children;
 - women and girls are seen as property to be easily sold and brought;
 - children are abused and run away, only to be befriended and sold on the streets;
 - the state requires children between the ages of 10 and 17 to work in the cotton fields under inhumane conditions;
 - children can be offered as slaves as a means of repentance;
 - children can be born slaves;
 - girls can be sold as a bride for as little as \$10;
 - boys can be bought for as little as \$1.75;
- and the list can go on and on.



Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal activity in the world. It now ranks second in profitability. It is only a matter of time before it passes the sale of drugs which is currently the number one criminal activity. Human trafficking is so lucrative that some criminals are moving from the sale of drugs to sale of persons.

What is Human Trafficking?

ACT	MEANS	PURPOSE	= HUMAN TRAFFICKING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Transport • Transfer • Harboring • Sale of persons • Receipt of persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat or use of force • Coercion • Abduction • Fraud • Deception • Abuse of power or vulnerability • Giving payment by payments or benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation • Including: • Prostitution of others • Sexual exploitation • Forced labor • Slavery or similar practices • Removal of organs • Other types of exploitation 	

We call upon Catholics to seek ways to assist diocesan and local governments in helping survivors.

Catholics can also help education fellow Catholics and others about the human consequences of this crime.

U. S. Bishops

Why Human Trafficking?

These are some of cause for human trafficking....

- poverty
- globalization
- greed
- profitable – at least \$31 billion annually
- demand
- penalties are weak
- porous borders
- easy transportation
- the internet
- shortage of women because of the one child policy



Who are the perpetrators...

- international organized crime syndicates
- family and relatives
- local organized crime
- mom and pop family operations [extended families on both sides of the border]
- independently owned businesses

Some ways to Identify a Victim of Human Trafficking?

If an adult....

- is not free to leave his/her job.
- cannot come and go as s/he pleases.
- has been threatened if s/he tries to leave?
- there are locks on doors and windows so the person cannot get out.
- needs to ask permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom.
- the person's family been threatened.
- does not have choice of where s/he will live.
- does not have legal documents if s/he came from another country.
- is not allowed to speak for her/himself.

If a child....

- is not attending school or has many unexplained absences.
- is working rather than going to school.
- has been threatened or his/her family has.
- is scared to talk or say where s/he lives and with whom.
- suffers from hunger or malnutrition.
- is dressed inappropriately and/or has a "boyfriend" who is 10+ years older.
- refers to frequent travel to or has lived in many different cities.



How Do I Report a Suspected Incident of Human Trafficking?

In emergencies call your local police. Otherwise, call the national 24-7 hotline toll-free at **1-888-3737-888**. This hotline is staffed by the Polaris Project. Your information will be given to the nearest law enforcement agency that handles human trafficking cases.

What are some things I can do.....

- continue to share with others information about human trafficking.
- purchase Fair Trade products and/or products made by survivors.
- give a gift through Heifer International so families can have a means of livelihood.
- pray for the victims of human trafficking that the global community will find ways of rescuing and supporting them in their recovery.
- work toward legislative changes to stiffen the penalty for traffickers and have their assets go toward survivor services.
- read the monthly *Stop Trafficking!* newsletter.
- give a donation to an organization that works with survivors of human trafficking.
- join monthly with those in silent vigil for victims of human trafficking.
- do one thing today for victims/survivors of human trafficking.
- become an abolitionist.



*Our lives begin to end the day
we become silent about the things that matter.*

Martin Luther King

Resources

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/index.shtml>

Stop Trafficking! Newsletter

<http://www.StopEnslavement.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Campaign to Rescue and Restore

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/>

U.S. Department of Education

Human Trafficking of Children in the United States A Fact Sheet for Schools

Can be opened and saved as Word or PDF document under “More Resources”

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/factsheet.html>

Prepared by the Peace and Justice Committee