

The Groningen Model United Nations 2018

Human Rights Council



Addressing the ongoing Problem of Underaged Prostitution



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Welcome Letter

Honourable Delegates,

We, Thiya and Inés, are very pleased to welcome you to this year's Human Rights Council at GrunnMUN 2018.

The Human Rights Council and its 47 elected members are an inter-governmental body within the United Nations and responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of Human Rights as written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights all over the world.

We will serve as your Chairs during the time of the conference but also as your guide for your preliminary preparation and questions of any kind. Therefore we prepared this background paper to give you the framework for your research of this year's topic: Condemning child prostitution.

For some of you this might be the first Model United Nations Conference while there will also be experienced Delegates among us. Either way, we strongly want to emphasize the importance of preparation for any committee work. Therefore we also like to add that this background paper is serving solely as a basic understanding of the topic and thorough research is of highest importance and inevitable to ensure a productive conference.

In case of any questions we will be happy to help anytime so please do not hesitate contacting us. We are very excited to meet you and wish you all the success for your preparation and GrunnMUN 2018!

Kindest regards

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GrunnMUN 2018

Introduction

There are various definitions for the term “child prostitution”. The United Nations defines it as “the act of engaging or offering the services of a child to perform sexual acts for money or other consideration with that person or any other person”¹. Child prostitution is illegal by international law and by the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 34 of this Convention states “Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse”. Important to note is, that any kind of sexual services by children is considered to be illegal even if performed with the child’s consent.

In 2014, the UNICEF study showed that around 120 million girls under the age of 20 have at least once been forced to sexual intercourse or other sexual acts. Boys, although to a lesser extent, are also confronted with sexual violence. Yet, the true extent of child prostitution is not clear because of its sensitivity and illegality, meaning that most cases are not reported². Moreover, most victims are reluctant to report of their abuse fearing the consequences they may face. These consequences could be in the form of stigmatisation or retaliation from the abuser³.

Child prostitution is especially common in developing countries such as Brazil and Thailand. Nevertheless, this does not mean that developed countries are free from child prostitution. In 2012, experts estimated that there are at least 100 000 cases of child prostitution each year in the United States.⁴

It is known, that sexual violence has serious short-term and long-term consequences for the child’s physical and mental health, the children for example face the risk of STDs such as HIV⁵. Some mental consequences a child might obtain are posttraumatic stress disorder, depression and attempted or completed suicide⁶.

Although child prostitution is illegal it is often difficult to enforce these laws properly due to the great international black market which makes it hard to control. According to UNODC, children make up one third of human trafficking cases⁷. Although there are numerous reasons as to why human trafficking is still ongoing, one of the biggest contributors of the problem is corruption. Border officials and criminal justice actors are some of the most vulnerable to corruption⁸. A stricter regulation is needed in order to truly stop this profitable crime.

¹ International Labour Organisation, 1996

² “Sexual violence against children.” *UNICEF*, 3 Jan. 2018, www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58006.html.

³ Csáky, Corinna. *No one to turn to: the under-reporting of child sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers and peacekeepers*. Save the Children, 2008.

⁴ National Colloquium, 2012.

⁵ “Sexual violence against children.” *UNICEF*, 3 Jan. 2018, www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58006.html.

⁶ “Together for Girls : Sexual Violence Fact Sheet.” Together for Girls, 2012.

⁷ “Report: Majority of trafficking victims are women and girls.” *United Nations*, United Nations, 22 Dec. 2016, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/12/report-majority-of-trafficking-victims-are-women-and-girls-one-third-children/.

⁸ “The Role of Corruption in Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011.

Types of Child Prostitution

Child prostitution includes two major types: forced prostitution and “Survival Sex”.

Forced prostitution originates from poor social structures and poverty. Adults use the vulnerability of children to abuse them sexually. In some cases, family members would force the child to be trafficked due to extreme poverty. Trafficking for sexual slavery accounts for 79% of cases of human trafficking, with the majority of victims being female, of which an estimated 20% are children.⁹

On the other hand, the US department of justice states that “Survival Sex occurs when a child engages in sex acts in order to obtain money, food, shelter, clothing, or other items needed in order to survive.”¹⁰

Reasons for both of these types of prostitution are often times the backgrounds of the affected children. Most minors engaging in prostitution are from places or areas where social structures are heavily disrupted. Their vulnerability is exploited by adults, commercially but also privately. There are different reasons that led to the exploitation of these children. Some being run-aways from home or state institutions, others have been sold by their parents or have been tricked by others. One of the worst cases of child prostitution are the ones in which children are being locked away by their caretakers and the risk of them being tortured or abused is high and could eventually lead to death.¹¹

In a world that is as interconnected as ours, children are facing an increased risk to be exploited or abused sexually. Even though the topic has gained more visibility and outspokenness, there are still measures to be taken to protect children from all social backgrounds and circumstances. Najat Maalla M’jid, a reporter of the sales of children concluded in her final report in March 2014 that the ever increasing and advancing technological development has made it easier to gain access to children and exposing them to such danger¹². This also adds on to the increasing ability to access child pornography online, especially with the presence of the “deep web”. Especially trafficking of children, child sex tourism and online exploitation of children are increasing with time.

⁹ “The Role of Corruption in Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011.

¹⁰ “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for: Prostitution of Children.” *The United States Department of Justice*, www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/frequently-asked-questions-faqs#prostitution.

¹¹ “Forced Labor: The Prostitution of Children: Symposium Proceedings” *Jaffe, Maureen; Rosen, Sonia (1997)*

¹² “Child trafficking, exploitation on the rise, warns UN expert | UN News.” *United Nations*, United Nations, 2014, news.un.org/en/story/2014/03/463842-child-trafficking-exploitation-rise-warns-un-expert.

Number of potential victims of child trafficking

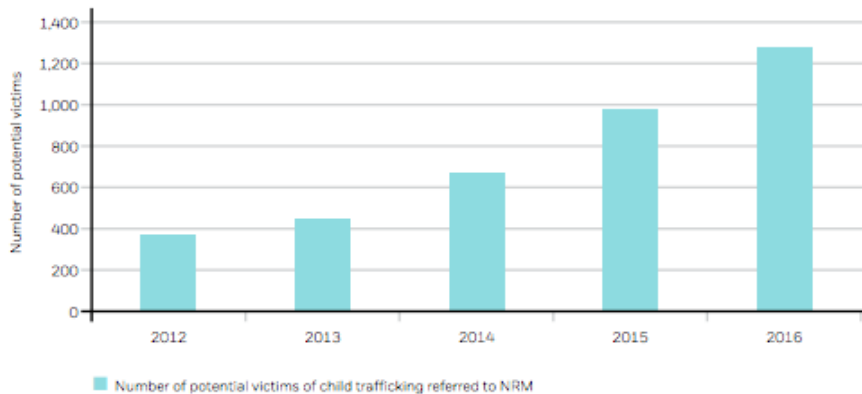


Figure 1. Number of potential victims of child trafficking.¹³

Although technological advancement offers a multitude of opportunities for children, they also possess a threat against them in the form of sale and sexual exploitation. Child prostitution is facilitated by the Internet in a number of ways. These include mobile telephone applications and websites which offer children for prostitution on online classified advertising sites¹⁴. Through the internet, traffickers develop new ways of recruitment or manipulation of potential victims. Identifying the number of children who are trafficked over the Internet for prostitution is very difficult as advertisements are being restricted to niche sites to hide their activities from law enforcement¹⁵.

Reasons

The supply and demand for children in the sex trade industry is greatly influenced by the economic structure of a country. This is why developing countries are more vulnerable towards trafficking and child prostitution. Kevin Bales says the increase of children sold into prostitution reflects the industrial transformation the country has experienced in the last fifty years. For example, young female prostitutes in Thailand are commonly from northern areas. Because of the harshness of the land and a family's dependency on a good harvest many families see their daughters as commodities¹⁶.

¹³ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2017/how-safe-are-our-children-2017/>

¹⁴ A/HRC/28/56

¹⁵ A/HRC/28/56

¹⁶ Bales, Kevin (2003), "Because she looks like a child", in Hochschild, Arlie; Ehrenreich, Barbara, *Global woman: nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*, New York: Metropolitan Books, pp. 207–229, ISBN 9780805075090.

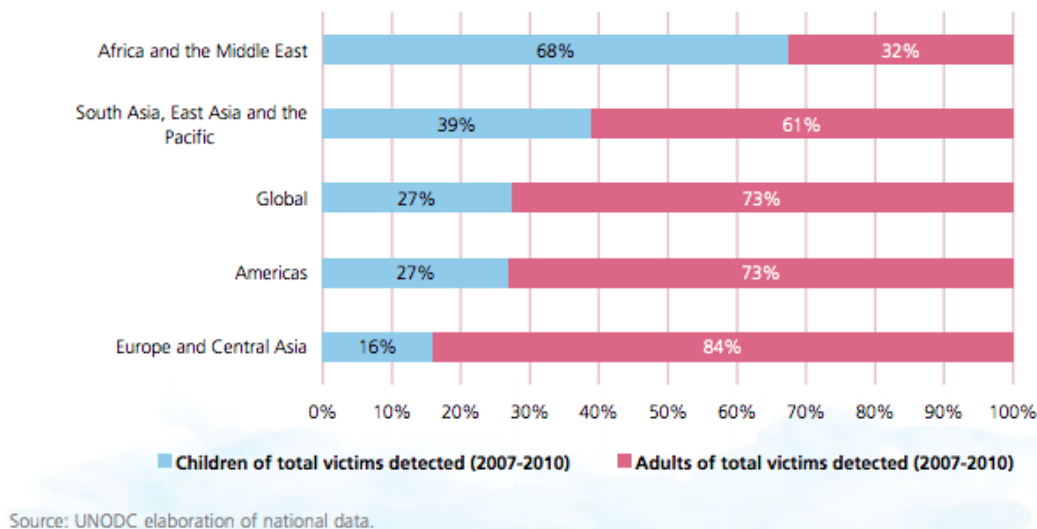


Figure 2. Share of child victims detected by region (2007-2010), UNODC.

On the macro-level of causes for child sexual exploitation are the globalization of the consumer market. This resulted in the influx of new goods and services that encourage new forms of consumerism¹⁷. The amount of money that is offered to parents for their children is often too good to refuse for them who are living at or below the poverty level. The children are turned over to the buyer without any prior knowledge of what they were sold into. It is estimated that child sex tourism could be worth around 20 billion USD per year¹⁸.

Other macro-level influences include the expansion of construction sites and military bases in developing countries. These installations attract those who wish to sexually exploit children for large sums of money. The men who participate in the sexual exploitation of children at these installations are most often from developed countries and have no regard for the health and safety of the children.

Families who sell their daughters to brothels tend to repeat the pattern with their younger daughters. The younger daughters, however, are more willing to go. This is due to the illusion of having increased chances of a bright future in the city¹⁹. The younger girls then enter into prostitution with little notion of what they are getting themselves into.

¹⁷ (Roby, J. L. "Women and Children in the Global Sex Trade: Toward More Effective Policy." *International Social Work* 48.2 (2005): 136-47. Sage Journals. Web. 09 Oct. 2013.)

¹⁸ *OHCHR | Combating child sex tourism*, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ChildSexTourism.aspx.

¹⁹ Bales, Kevin (2003), "Because she looks like a child", in Hochschild, Arlie; Ehrenreich, Barbara, *Global woman: nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*, New York: Metropolitan Books, pp. 207–229, ISBN 9780805075090

Impact

Important to note is the long-lasting physical as well as psychological effects that the victim may experience. This does not only affect those directly involved, but also family and friends of the victims. For the children themselves, engaging in these activities increased their risk of sexual and reproductive health problems, including unintended pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. According to one study, 50%-90% of children who are rescued from brothels in some parts of Southeast Asia are found to have been infected with HIV²⁰.

Estimated yearly occurrence	
Adverse health effects in prostituted children*	
Infectious disease	
STDs	2 000 000
HIV infection	300 000
HPV infection	4 500 000
HBV infection	500 000
Pregnancy	
Maternal deaths	4752
Spontaneous abortions	900 000
Induced abortions	1224 000
Abortion-related complications	367 200
Abortion-related deaths	710
Mental illness	
PTSD	6 700 000
Attempted suicide	1640 000
Substance abuse	
All substances	9 000 000
Violence	
Physical assault	2 500 000
Rape	2 500 000
Murder	6900
Malnutrition	Unable to estimate
Adverse health effects in infants born to prostituted children;	
Infant deaths	190 080
Complication of STDs	237 000
HIV infection	249480
Deaths from HIV infection	54 886
HBV infection	8316
<small>STD=sexually transmitted disease. HPV=human papillomavirus. HBV=hepatitis B virus. PTSD=post-traumatic stress disorder. *Based on an estimated 9 million girls and 1 million boys prostituted per year. †Based on an estimated 2 376 000 infants born to prostituted children per year.</small>	

Table 1. Estimated yearly occurrence of adverse health effects in prostituted children. Retrieved from: Willis, B., and Levy, B. "Child prostitution: global health burden, research needs, and interventions." *Lancet*. 359.9315 (2002).

Moreover, not only are these sexual activities physically harmful for these children, they also bring psychological damage. These damages are in the form of psychological trauma, including depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Damage to the mental health are likely to be long term.

These factors need to be taken into consideration during the rehabilitation process of victims and the overall process needs to be focused on the most ideal rehabilitation of the victims and everyone involved. The affected children should also be involved, or given the chance to be involved, in the process.

²⁰ Willis, B., and Levy, B. "Child prostitution: global health burden, research needs, and interventions." *Lancet*. 359.9315 (2002).

Current Development

Over last few decades, the international community has increasingly acknowledged the importance of addressing problems posed by the trafficking of children, child prostitution, and child pornography; activities that undermine the rights of children and are frequently linked to organized crime ("International Criminalisation and Child Welfare Protection': the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child") While the legality of adult prostitution varies between different parts of the world, the prostitution of minors is illegal in most countries, and all countries have some form of restrictions against it.²¹

By 1990, international awareness of the commercial sexual exploitation and the sale of children had grown to such a level that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Special Rapporteur has four main activities, namely undertaking country visits, sending individual complaints, writing thematic reports and conducting awareness-raising and advocacy to promote and protect human rights of children²².

Resolution 68/174 of 2014 calls upon all states to prevent, criminalize, prosecute and punish effectively all forms of the sale of children. The resolution also highlights, among others, the important role each states has in order to fully prevent child prostitution from continuing.

Conclusion

Child prostitution is an alarming topic that still manages to take place to this day. These exploitations comes in two major forms of either survival sex or forced prostitution. Reasons on why this is still occurring are among others poverty, poor social structures and loose state government law. Globalization and technological improvements contribute to the increase of exploitations through child pornography and sex tourism. Moreover, most of the exploitation is difficult to detect as they manage to go under the radar of the law. Also, it operates mostly in developing countries where government officials are more vulnerable to bribery.

Cases of child prostitution are under-reported as victims fear to report their experiences. These children suffer from both psychological and physical damage. Rehabilitation is needed for them to reintegrate back into society.

Keeping in mind the mandates of the UNHRC, delegates are encouraged to study the existing resolutions and come up with more efficient and comprehensive resolutions to prevent this issue from continuing.

²¹ Forced Labor: The Prostitution of Children: Symposium Proceedings

²² <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Children/Pages/ChildrenIndex.aspx>

Questions the Resolution needs to answer

There are three main issues that need to be addressed in the resolution. The first one is the root causes of the problem.

- How can we improve social structures in affected areas and how can crimes be prevented?
- How can the population be made aware of the problems and is there a way to educate children on this issue?
- What short-term solutions can provide immediate relief to affected children?
- How can appropriate treatment and counselling for former victims be insured?

Suggested Reading

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPSCCRC.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ChildSexTourism.aspx>

<https://www.defenceforchildren.nl/images/13/3517.pdf>

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