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**Author(s):                    Donna M. Hughes ; Tatyana Denisova**

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# Trafficking in Women from Ukraine

**Donna M. Hughes**  
**University of Rhode Island**

**And**

**Tatyana Denisova**  
**Zaporizhia State University**

## **FINAL REPORT**

Approved By: M. Battle

Date: 6/27/03

**Research Associates:** Sergey Denisov, Zaporizhia Academy of Law; Sergey Demenko, Zaporizhia State University; Victoria Palchenkova, Zaporizhia State University, Volodimir Bilkun, Zaporizhia State University

**Research Assistants:** Paul Serdyuk, Zaporizhia State University; Kelly Brooks, University of Rhode Island; Amy Potenza, University of Rhode Island

**Translators:** Kate Zuzina, Rule of Law, Kyiv; Svetlana Chujan, Zaporizhia State University

This research was carried out as part of the U.S. Ukraine Research Partnership as part of an agreement between the International Center of the U. S. National Institute of Justice and the Ukrainian Academy of Legal Sciences.

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## Executive Summary

This research on the trafficking of women from Ukraine was conducted as part of the U.S.-Ukraine Research Partnership, an agreement between the International Center of the U. S. National Institute of Justice and the Ukrainian Academy of Legal Sciences.

Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, often referred to as a modern day form of slavery, is a multi-billion dollar global criminal activity. The moneymakers are transnational networks of traffickers and pimps that prey on the dreams of women seeking employment and opportunities for the future. This trade in women is based on supply and demand from sending and receiving countries. Countries with large sex industries create the demand and are the receiving countries, while countries where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending countries. Currently, Ukraine is a supplier of women for prostitution. Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation is a serious problem in Ukraine affecting 100,000s of victims and their families.

The aim of this project was to research trafficking in women and children from Ukraine for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The research aimed to: 1) Characterize the victims of trafficking; 2) Characterize the perpetrators of trafficking and their organizations, such as size, structure, and organization of the gangs and networks; 3) Determine if trafficking in women and children is a form and if it is linked to international organized crime networks; and 4) Determine if there are links between sex industries inside Ukraine and the international trafficking in women and children.

Data was collected through interviews and surveys in Ukraine. Materials were collected from various sources inside Ukraine and from the countries of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Latvia, Turkey, Japan, and the United States. The Internet was used to collect information for the bride agency research.

The sexual exploitation of women in prostitution has risen sharply following the independence of Ukraine. Women in prostitution in Ukraine were interviewed. Narcotics addicted women who stood along the highway described critical losses in their lives and the use of drugs as factors influencing their involvement in and inability to leave prostitution. Women in street prostitution in the city center described their life circumstances and the violence they were subjected to in prostitution.

Women are being recruited and trafficked from almost all regions of Ukraine. Women from different regions of Ukraine are likely to be trafficked to different destination countries. From the western regions of Ukraine, women are trafficked mostly to the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Germany. From the northern regions, women are most often trafficked to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the Netherlands. From the southern regions, women are taken to Turkey, Greece, Italy, Romania, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Syria, and Germany. From the eastern regions, women are most often taken to Russia and then on to other countries.

Approximately 70 percent of the victims were trafficked by means of sophisticated deceptions. Mostly, the women were offered work abroad as a waitress or dancer. Traffickers approach beauty contest participants with offers of contracts for modeling abroad. "Modeling" schools were also used to train and recruit victims. Women are most frequently trafficked through travel agencies, most of which are legally registered.

Ukrainian women are often taken to intermediary or transit countries before reaching their final destinations. Sometimes the travel documents they are given are authentic having been issued

by corrupt officials; other times, they are counterfeit. Women sometimes travel over land and cross borders illegally. Passing through several transit countries makes it more difficult to trace women who have disappeared. Police are often reluctant to pursue cases of missing women, especially if they had legal travel documents.

Approximately 65 percent of cases of trafficking of women was carried out by organized crime groups. They are highly organized, large-scale operations that are connected to corrupt officials. The criminal groups also traffic drugs and are involved in racketeering.

Eighty percent of the traffickers are Ukrainian citizens, and about 60 percent are women. The traffickers use women who were formerly in prostitution as recruiters. The pimps in the destination countries places orders with the traffickers for the number of women they need. Once the women arrive at the destination, the criminal group controls them. Women must repay inflated debts before they are released and their identity and/or travel documents returned. If the women do not comply they are threatened, beaten, and raped. A former trafficker/pimp presented the researchers with photographs of a victim being humiliated. These photographs were used to control her.

Victims and family members of victims are afraid to talk to the police. Often victims do not tell their friends and families what has happened to them while they were abroad. Only 12 percent reported their victimization. The risk of retaliation from the traffickers and organized crime groups is too high.

A review of 219 "marriage" or "introduction" agencies that operate on the Internet was carried out to determine patterns of recruitment of women. There were almost 32,000 women from Ukraine listed by these agencies. There were a few distinct patterns for the recruitment of women in Ukraine. Generally, the oblasts with the lowest number of recruited women are in western Ukraine. Oblasts with large cities, such as the capital Kyiv, Odessa, and Dnipropetrovsk, have large numbers of women in the marriage agencies. The Crimea had the largest number of women recruited, and the other oblast on or near the Black Sea have fairly high numbers of women recruited from them. Non-governmental organizations report that women have been trafficked into prostitution after being recruited by bride agencies.

According to surveys conducted by the Ukrainian researchers, two-thirds of young Ukrainian women want to go abroad. Many of them are influenced not only by the poverty and lack of opportunity at home, but by the Western lifestyles seen in the media. Many believe they will find a wealthy, attractive Western businessman who will marry them and solve their problems.

Three hundred and fifty-nine people were surveyed in six regional cities about their awareness of trafficked and attitudes towards trafficked women. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that they were aware of the problem of trafficking in women from Ukraine. Twelve percent said there was no trafficking because they women chose to go abroad. Seventy-eight percent said that the woman was the victim of a crime who required assistance, while the remaining 22 percent said that the woman is "guilty," and had no sympathy for what happened to her.

Almost half of those surveyed said that the cause of prostitution was the economic problems in society. About one third said the primary cause of trafficking was men's demand for women in prostitution. Approximately 20 percent said they cause was women's "depravity." Of those surveyed, only 25 percent said they would maintain contact with a daughter if they knew she was in prostitution.

Destination countries have complementary factors that enable and facilitate the trafficking of women, such as organized crime, official corruption, and lack of services for victims.

Recommendations for combating trafficking include:

- Demonstrate political will to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Combat corruption and organized crime
- Improve awareness and prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Provide services to victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Increase law enforcement efforts to combat and prevent trafficking in women
- Ratify and implement the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish the Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Develop international cooperation with transit and destination countries
- Encourage research on all aspects of trafficking and sexual exploitation

# Introduction

This research on the trafficking of women from Ukraine was conducted as part of the U.S.-Ukraine Research Partnership, as part of an agreement between the International Center of the U. S. National Institute of Justice and the Ukrainian Academy of Legal Sciences.

This report on trafficking of women in Ukraine is divided into three sections. The first section is a background paper that was researched and written prior to the initiation of research in Ukraine. The purpose was finding the existing knowledge on trafficking of women in Ukraine and put it into social, political, and economic context of the country and region. The background paper also provided a conceptualization of the problem of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, especially from Ukraine, on which to base future research. The second section of the report describes the research methods and findings of two years of research conducted by Donna M. Hughes and Tatyana Denisova and their research colleagues and assistants. The third section is recommendations for combating the trafficking of women from Ukraine.

In section one, the scope of the problem of trafficking is discussed and the definition of trafficking is reviewed. The international shadow market for women is located in the globalization process and characterized as a modern day slave trade. The role of transnational crime networks in the trafficking of women is examined with a few illustrative cases. The methods used to recruit and traffic from their hometowns and transported to sex industries in other countries are described. Although there are a number of ways that women are trafficked, their ultimate circumstance is entrapment in prostitution. How women are controlled and why it is so difficult for them to escape is described. The next part of the paper focuses on who is profiting from this slave trade and how official corruption and collaboration with organized crime networks facilitates and protects the traffickers. Some people suggest that prostitution and trafficking are shadow economies that enable unemployed women to earn a living. The idea that women and communities may benefit from the shadow market of trafficking in women is examined. This part of the paper describes who profits from trafficking in women. Although the problem of trafficking in women in gaining more attention, when the causes of trafficking are examined, the gendered dimension of the supply and, especially, the demand are frequently left out of the analysis. The gendered supply and demand of trafficking challenges the frequent assumption that poverty is the most important factor in determining which countries will become sending countries. The last part of the paper takes a closer look at the demand side of the dynamics of supply and demand from sending and receiving countries. The legalization of prostitution and brothels is examined and old and new legal remedies that address the demand are discussed.

The second section of the report describes the research methods and findings of almost two years of research on trafficking in women in Ukraine. The research findings describe the economic factors compelling women to seek work abroad which contributes to the relative ease with which traffickers can recruit women with promises of good jobs abroad. The report examines the sexual exploitation of women and children and the organization of prostitution inside Ukraine. The links to prostitution inside Ukraine and the recruitment of women for destinations countries outside Ukraine are described. Next, the transnational trafficking of women from Ukraine is examined in detail, including number of cases, source regions, and destination countries. The involvement of organized crime networks is described and an in depth interview with a trafficker and pimp is included illustrate how a trafficking and prostitution ring is organized between Ukraine and Moscow. The methods that traffickers use to recruit women and children are described in detail. The recruitment

of women and children by marriage agencies is described and their link to trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Since trafficking of women and children is such a serious problem, the awareness of the public is critical to the prevention of trafficking. The findings of public surveys are described. Of particular interest is eagerness of young women to go abroad, even if they incur great risks.

Although most of the research for this study focused on Ukraine as a source country for trafficked women, information is included about destination countries. A brief review of the conditions for trafficked women in one destination country is included. The severe harm to the victims based is described. The role of organized crime and corrupt officials in destination countries illustrates that the crime of trafficking of women and children is a transnational problem that requires solutions in both sending and received countries.

Finally, recommendations for combating trafficking for sexual exploitation are listed.

Researchers Tatyana Denisova and Donna Hughes created Web sites (in Ukrainian and English, respectively) for the research project on trafficking in women from Ukraine. The English version, housed at the University of Rhode Island (<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/ukraine/>) includes translations of most documents into Russian (Translation was done by Kate Zuzina, Rule of Law Foundation, Kyiv.) The Ukrainian version is housed at the Zaporizhia State University (<http://www.zsu.zp.ua/urfak/grand.htm>)

The Web sites include an introduction to the U.S.-Ukraine Research Partnership and a description of the research done on trafficking in women from Ukraine. Texts of documents relating to the project, such as Zaporizhia International Roundtable Program and Resolution from the Roundtable are posted on the Web sites. Also included are media stories in which the trafficking of Ukrainian woman is mentioned.

# Literature Review and Conceptualization of the Problem<sup>1</sup>

Donna M. Hughes

Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a multi-billion dollar shadow market.<sup>2</sup> Women are trafficked to, from, and through every region in the world using methods that have become new forms of slavery.<sup>3</sup> The value of the global trade in women as commodities for sex industries is estimated to be between seven and twelve billion dollars annually.<sup>4</sup> This trade in women is a highly profitable enterprise with relatively low risk compared to trades in drugs or arms. The moneymakers are transnational networks of traffickers and pimps that prey on the dreams of women seeking employment and opportunities for the future. The activities of these networks threaten the well being and status of women as well as the social, political and economic well being and stability of nations where they operate.

The transnational trade in women is based on supply and demand from sending and receiving countries. Countries with large sex industries create the demand and are the receiving countries, while countries where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending countries. For decades, the primary sending countries were Asian countries, such as Thailand and the Philippines. The collapse of the Soviet Union opened up a pool of millions of women from which traffickers can recruit. Now, former Soviet republics, such as Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Russia, have become major sending countries for women trafficked into sex industries all over the world. In the sex industry markets today, the most popular and valuable women are from Ukraine and Russia.<sup>5</sup> Ukraine, now the second largest country in Europe, is one of the largest suppliers of women for prostitution.

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<sup>1</sup> The introduction of this report was published in a slightly different form as "The 'Natasha' Trade: The Transnational Shadow Market of Trafficking in Women," in the *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, Spring 2000, pp. 625-651. A translation was published in *Sourcebook on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children*, Office of the Resident Legal Adviser, U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine, June 2000. A revised version was published as "The 'Natasha' Trade: International Sex Trafficking," in *National Institute of Justice Journal*, January 2001, U.S. Department of Justice, No. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation often includes girls under the age of consent. The percentage of victims of trafficking who are under age is not known, although raids on brothels frequently find girls as well as women. In this paper, I talk about trafficking in women, but it is assumed that many of the victims are under age girls.

<sup>3</sup> Donna M. Hughes, Laura Joy Sporcic and Nadine Mendelsohn, *Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation* (Kingston, Rhode Island: The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 1999), <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/catw/factbook.htm>; Dorchen Leidholdt, "Prostitution: A Contemporary Form of Slavery," Presentation at United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Geneva, Switzerland, May 1998, <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/catw/slavery.htm>

<sup>4</sup> "UN official warns of rise of new slaves of prostitutes," *Xinhua*, 21 September 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Specter, *New York Times*.

## **Numbers of Trafficked Women**

It is difficult to know how many women have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>6</sup> The trade is secretive, the women are silenced, the traffickers are dangerous, and not many agencies are counting. In examining trafficking from countries of the former Soviet Union, they are referred to as "Russian" or "Eastern European" without further information on the specific country. When this research was initiated, "trafficking" did not have a universal usage, resulting in different numbers of women being counted depending on the definition used. For this report and research, the following definition of trafficking is used. It includes the essential elements to be considered in trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>7</sup>

*Trafficking is any practice that involves moving people within and across local or national borders for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Trafficking may be the result of force, coercion, manipulation, deception, abuse of authority, initial consent, family pressure, past and present family and community violence, economic deprivation, or other conditions of inequality for women and children.*<sup>8</sup>

This definition recognizes that trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation occurs within the borders of a country as well as across international borders, as women are sometimes recruited and exploited in local sex industries before they are trafficked transnationally. This definition accepts that trafficking occurs even if the woman consents, which is consistent with the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.<sup>9</sup> Narrower definitions of trafficking require acts of violence or coercion against the victim before trafficking is said to occur. According to estimates from the United Nations, one quarter of the four million people trafficked each year are exploited in sex industries. In the last decade, hundreds of thousands of women have been trafficked from Central and Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union into prostitution throughout the world. In the European Union, there are an estimated half a million Central and Eastern European women in prostitution.<sup>10</sup> A criminal investigation in Germany in 1998 found that 87.5 percent of the women trafficked into Germany were from Eastern Europe. Seventeen percent were from Poland, 14 percent from Ukraine, 12 percent from Czech Republic and 8 percent from the Russian Federation.<sup>11</sup>

In 1998, the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior estimated that 400,000 Ukrainian women were trafficked during the previous decade; other sources, such as non-governmental organizations,

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<sup>6</sup> Sexual exploitation is a practice by which a person achieves sexual gratification, financial gain or advancement through the abuse or exploitation of a person's sexuality by abrogating that person's human right to dignity, equality, autonomy, and physical and mental well-being; i.e. trafficking, prostitution, prostitution tourism, mail-order-bride trade, pornography, stripping, battering, incest, rape and sexual harassment.

<sup>7</sup> Human trafficking occurs for purposes other than sexual exploitation, such as for labor in sweat shops and as domestic servants and agricultural workers and children for adoption, but this paper will focus on trafficking of women and girls for the sex industry.

<sup>8</sup> This definition of trafficking was modified slightly from that put forth by the international non-governmental organization, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women.

<sup>9</sup> The text and signatories of the 1949 Convention can be viewed at <http://www.uri.edu/dignity/49conven.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Roland-Pierre Paringaux, "Prostitution take a turn for the West," *Le Monde*, 24 May 1998.

<sup>11</sup> "Most of foreign prostitutes in Germany come from Eastern Europe," *Itar-Tass*, 15 November 1999.

thought the number was higher.<sup>12</sup> The International Organization for Migration estimated that between 1991 and 1998, 500,000 Ukrainian women had been trafficked to the West.<sup>13</sup> Popular destination countries for women from Ukraine include: Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Syria, China, the Netherlands, Canada and Japan.<sup>14</sup> According to a Ukrainian diplomatic source there are 6,000 Ukrainian women in prostitution in Turkey, 3,000 in Greece, and 1000 in Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup> Ukrainian women are the largest group of foreign women in prostitution in Turkey<sup>16</sup> and the second largest group of foreign women in prostitution outside the U.S. military bases in Korea.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, as a result of trafficking, Russian women are in prostitution in over 50 countries.<sup>18</sup> In some parts of the world, such as Israel and Turkey, women from Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union are so prevalent, that prostitutes are called "Natashas."<sup>19</sup>

### ***A Modern Day Slave Trade: The International Shadow Market for Women***

The growth of shadow economies and transnational criminal networks in newly independent states are negative manifestations of globalization, arising from expanding economic, political and social transnational linkages that are increasingly beyond local and state control. An important component of globalization is the transnational linkages created by migration. Members of organized crime rings establish contacts with willing collaborators in diaspora communities throughout the world and work within migrating populations to build transnational criminal networks. Increased migration also serves as a cover for traffickers in transporting women to destinations in the sex industry.

Privatization and liberalization of markets have created wider and more open marketplaces throughout the world. Another important component of globalization, computer communication technologies have enabled the increased volume and complexity of international financial transactions, which increases opportunities for transnational crime and decreases the probability of detection and apprehension. This technological aspect of globalization enables the money gained through illegal activities, like trafficking in women, to be transferred and laundered.

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<sup>12</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign Against Trafficking in Women from Ukraine-Research Report* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, July 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Chris Bird, "100,000 Ukrainians slaves of West's sex industry," *Reuters*, 6 July 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Kateryna Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking in Women and Forced Prostitution: Ukraine, Country Report* (Vienna: Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, September 1999).

<sup>15</sup> "Ukraine cracks down on sexual slavery," *Newsline* Vol. 2, No. 71. Part II (Prague, Czech Republic: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 14 April 1998).

<sup>16</sup> "Ukraine film warns of forcible prostitution abroad," *Russia Today*, 1 July 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication from Jean Enriquez, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific, Manila, the Philippines, 17 November 1999.

<sup>18</sup> MiraMed Institute, "Who is trafficking CIS women?" *Preliminary Survey Report on Sexual Trafficking in the CIS*. Moscow: MiraMed Institute, June 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Martina Vandenberg, "The Invisible Woman," *Moscow Times*, 8 October 1997, p. 8.

In the former Soviet Union, the shadow economy began long before the collapse of the communism. The state economy didn't supply the general population with the goods and services they needed or wanted. For decades, a shadow economy operated to meet those demands. There is even evidence that shortages were planned, so as to benefit those controlling and profiting from the shadow economy.<sup>20</sup>

When the political and economic system weakened and collapsed, existing organizations leaped to fill the vacuum. Following the end of a government run economy, privatization enabled previously illegal markets of the shadow economy to operate legally and expand, but they retained the same methods of doing business based on corruption and protection schemes. As independent states emerged from the former Soviet Union they lacked organized and efficient regulatory agencies to hinder the growth and activities of crime networks. When the state system was no longer able to pay the salaries of many employees, they joined the criminal networks.<sup>21</sup> In Ukraine, people who were no longer able to support themselves with one salary or weren't being paid for long periods of time, sought additional work. The only jobs available were in the newly emerging privatized, criminal businesses. By 1995, the shadow economy accounted for 50 percent of the GDP.<sup>22</sup> The result has been a criminalization of the economy in general and expansion of organized criminal networks.

Transnational trafficking of women is a new type of crime in the republics of the former Soviet Union. This activity first started in the Soviet Union during perestroika, when restrictions on international travel were eased. The disintegration of the Soviet Union opened borders for travel, migration and privatized trade, all of which facilitated the operations of criminal networks. Sex industries in receiving countries create a demand for women that transnational crime networks from the newly independent states organized to fill with relatively low risk and high profits for the networks. Trafficking exists to meet the demand for women, who are used in brothels, massage parlors, bars and stretches of streets and highways where women are sold to men in prostitution. Ukraine, especially, has become a major source of young women for the international sex markets.<sup>23</sup> Hundreds of victims of trafficking have recounted their experiences to non-governmental organizations, reporters and police. Although there are individual variations, there are similar themes of manipulation and violence from the traffickers and further persecution by the police.

*Irina, aged 18, responded to an advertisement in a Kyiv, Ukraine newspaper for a training course in Berlin in 1996. With a fake passport, she traveled to Berlin, Germany where she was told that the school had closed. She was sent on to Brussels, Belgium for a job. When she arrived she was told she needed to repay a debt of US\$10,000 and would have to earn the money in prostitution. Her passport was confiscated, and she was threatened, beaten and raped. When she didn't earn enough money she was sold to a Belgium pimp who operated in Rue d'Aarschot in the Brussel's red light district. When she managed to escape through the assistance of police, she was arrested because she had no legal documentation.*

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<sup>20</sup> William H. Webster, *Russian Organized Crime—Global Organized Crime Project* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1997), pp. 26-32.

<sup>21</sup> Todd S. Fogelson and Peter H. Solomon, *Crime, Criminal Justice and Criminology in Post-Soviet Ukraine - A Report* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, August 30, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma—Political Reform, Economic Transformation, and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 152.

<sup>23</sup> Bird, *Reuters*

*A medical exam verified the abuse she had suffered, such as cigarette burns all over her body.<sup>24</sup>*

*Lena, aged 21, was recruited by a woman who said her daughter was working in Greece and making a lot of money. When Lena arrived in Greece, her passport had been taken away and she was put into a small room in a brothel guarded by two dogs. She was sold in prostitution each night from nine in the evening until six in the morning. When she escaped and returned to Mykolayiv she had US\$55.00.<sup>25</sup>*

*Tatyana, aged 20, is from a small town in Lugansk oblast in Eastern Ukraine. She could not find a job there because the economy is very poor and the factories are closed. A friend of her mother told her that rich families in the United Arab Emirates were hiring housemaids and she could earn US\$4000 a month there. However, when she arrived in the United Arab Emirates, her passport was taken away and she was sold to a brothel for US\$7,000 and forced into prostitution to repay the purchase and travel costs to the owner. When she managed to escape and went to the police for help, she was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison for working in a brothel.<sup>26</sup>*

Transnational crime networks take advantage of patterns of migration to traffic women. An example is the increased migration and trafficking of women from the former Soviet Union to Israel. After 1989, Soviet Jews started immigrating to Israel, resulting in 800,000 new immigrants to Israel. Russian and Ukrainian traffickers used this cover to bring 10,000 women into Israel for the sex industry. The sex industry in Israel has since grown into a US\$450 million a year industry, which is dependent on trafficked women from Eastern Europe.<sup>27</sup> Professor Menachem Amir of Hebrew University, an expert on organized crime in Israel, estimates that 70 percent of the women in prostitution in Tel Aviv are from the former Soviet republics.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, according to Israel's report to CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Report, more than 95 percent of the women deported from Israel for illegal prostitution are repatriated to the former Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup> From 1995-1997, Israel deported 1500 Russian and Ukrainian women.<sup>30</sup>

In Israel, a Russian or Ukrainian woman earns the pimp who controls her between US\$50,000 and \$100,000 per year. The women are enslaved and get to keep little, if any, of the money. Often, their only way out of the sex industry is a police raid, which results in deportation.<sup>31</sup> Women are held in debt bondage in which they must repay their purchase price, travel expenses and all other expenses charged to them, which can be considerable, before they are allowed to leave. A

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<sup>24</sup> Paringaux, *Le Monde*

<sup>25</sup> Bird, *Reuters*

<sup>26</sup> Narcisa Escaler, "Statement at the United States-European Union Transatlantic Seminar to Prevent Trafficking in Women," Lviv, Ukraine, 9-10 July 1998.

<sup>27</sup> "Israel prostitution ring targeted," *AP Online*, 23 December 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Israel Women's Network, *Trafficking of Women to Israel and Forced Prostitution* (Jerusalem), November 1997.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Specter, *New York Times*.

<sup>31</sup> "A modern form of slavery," *Jerusalem Post*, 13 January 1998.

woman may be sold from one pimp to another at which time her debt to be repaid starts all over again. There are indications that pimps, working in collaboration with officials, tip-off police on the whereabouts of women just about the time the women have earned enough money to leave, resulting in the women being arrested and deported and the pimps keeping all the money.<sup>32</sup> A number of trafficking rings have been uncovered which reveal the tactics, financial rewards and transnational reach of traffickers.

*In March 1999 in Sevastopol, Crimea, Ukraine, two men and a woman, using the firm "Sight" as a cover, were arrested for selling 200 Ukrainian women and girls, aged 13 to 25, for the sex industry in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. They traffickers were intercepted as they attempted to send more women to Turkey by ship. The traffickers received US\$2000 for each woman. The women were held in debt bondage until they repaid their expenses. If they complained their debt was tripled.*<sup>33</sup>

*In Poland, where approximately 70 percent of the Ukrainian women are working under duress in the sex industry, a prostitution ring, called Agencija Tovazhyshka, controls three to ten women. Guards travel with the women and watch them at all times. The women are sold from one agency to another for DM2,000 to 5,000 and each time the woman incurs the debt that must be repaid.*<sup>34</sup>

*In August 1999 police arrested three people in Chernihiv Oblast, Ukraine for trafficking women to Hungary. They had previously sold 16 women to Italian and Spanish brothels for US\$800 each.*<sup>35</sup>

*In September 1999, a woman psychology teacher from Cherkasy, Ukraine was charged with being head of an international trafficking ring that sold young Ukrainian women into the sex industry in the United Arab Emirates. Along with criminals from Kazakhstan, Syria and the United Arab Emirates, the gang promised 30 young women jobs as dancers, waitresses or domestic servants, then sold them to buyers in the sex industry.*<sup>36</sup>

## **Methods of Recruitment and Trafficking**

Sex industries use up women, physically and emotionally, necessitating fresh supplies of women on a regular basis, which keeps the recruitment and trafficking of women so profitable. Recruiters, traffickers, and pimps who engage in trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation have developed common methods of operation. One method of recruitment is advertisements in newspapers offering lucrative job opportunities in foreign countries for low skilled jobs, such as waitresses and nannies. Some advertisements promise good salaries to young,

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<sup>32</sup> Israel Women's Network, "Trafficking in women to Israel and forced prostitution," *Refuge* 17 (November 1998): 26-32.

<sup>33</sup> "Ukrainian police arrest sex trade gang," *Newsline* Vol. 3, No. 54, Part II (Prague, Czech Republic: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 18 March 1999). Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine, *Crime Digest*, March 1999, <http://www.usemb.kiev.ua/rso/CrimeDigest9903.html>

<sup>34</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine, *Crime Digest*, January 1999, <http://www.usemb.kiev.ua/rso/CrimeDigest9901.html>

<sup>35</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kyiv, Ukraine. *Crime Digest*, August 1999, <http://www.usemb.kiev.ua/rso/CrimeDigest9908.html>.

<sup>36</sup> "Ukrainian teacher held over sex ring allegations," *Reuters*, 24 September 1999.

attractive women who will work as dancers and hostesses. An inspection of newspapers in Ukraine showed that each contained five to 20 suspicious advertisements.<sup>37</sup> Women are recruited through social events and auditions, such as photo sessions. The process is usually complex, with detailed deception calculated to reassure the women that the employment opportunity is genuine.<sup>38</sup> It is estimated that 20 percent of trafficked women are recruited through media advertisements.

Another method of recruitment is “marriage agencies,” sometimes called mail-order-bride agencies or international introduction services. According to the International Organization for Migration, all mail-order-bride agencies with women from the republics of the former Soviet Union are under the control of organized crime networks.<sup>39</sup> Many of these agencies operate on the Internet.<sup>40</sup> Recruiters use “marriage agencies” as a way to contact women who are eager to travel or emigrate. This route into the sex industry can take several forms. The recruiters may be traffickers or work directly with traffickers. The woman may meet with a man who promises marriage at a later date. The man may use the woman himself for a short period of time, then coerce her into making pornography and later sell her to the sex industry, or he may directly deliver the woman to a brothel.

Some traffickers use the woman’s legal documents and tourist visas to legally enter the destination countries. The women may be put on a circuit by pimps in which they are moved from country to country on legal tourist visas or entertainers’ visas. Other times, the woman is given false documents. In this case, the woman is even more vulnerable after she arrives in the destination country because she is there illegally. If police discover her, she is arrested and deported.

The most common way women are recruited in Ukraine is through a friend or acquaintance, who gains the woman’s confidence. An increasing phenomenon is called “the second wave,” in which trafficked women return home to recruit other women. Once a woman has been trafficked and trapped in the sex industry, she has few options. Escape may be difficult. Since women get to keep little of the money they earn, they often have little to show for their experiences abroad. Also, because of the stigma attached to women in prostitution, they often face discrimination at home. One of the few means of escaping the brutality of being forced to have unwanted sex each day with multiple men is to move from victim to perpetrator. To do this, women who have been trafficked return home to recruit new victims.<sup>41</sup> According to one report, for instance, in Ukraine, 70 percent of pimps are women.<sup>42</sup> A recruiter gets from US\$200 to \$5,000 for each woman recruited.<sup>43</sup>

Sometimes women are recruited in groups. In one case, women from Lviv, Ukraine were offered housekeeping jobs in the Czech Republic. The traffickers took their passports when they

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<sup>37</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*

<sup>38</sup> MiraMed Institute, *Preliminary Survey Report*

<sup>39</sup> International Organization for Migration.

<sup>40</sup> Donna M. Hughes, “Sex tours via the Internet.” *Agenda: A Journal about Women and Gender* 28 (1996): 71-76.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “Ukrainian women - victims of sex industry,” *Itar-Tass*, 30 June 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*

crossed the border. Upon their arrival in the Czech Republic, they were sold for US\$300-\$700 each to a pimp who forced them into prostitution on the Czech-German highway.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Entrapment of Women in Prostitution***

Whatever the recruitment method, the majority of women do not expect the sexual exploitation and violence that awaits them. Aleksandr Strokanov from Interpol-Ukraine estimated that 75 percent of the women do not realize they will be forced into prostitution.<sup>45</sup> After the woman has reached the destination country, the trafficker or pimp will tell her that she is not going to work as a waitress, nanny, or whatever more agreeable opportunity was offered, but will be in prostitution. The methods used to control women once they reach the destination country include: confiscation of travel documents, violence, threats to harm family members and debt bondage.

Even when women know they will be in prostitution, their expectations are usually far from the reality. One woman, who knew she would have to engage in prostitution, thought it would be like in the film "Pretty Woman," where one man would support her.<sup>46</sup> The women don't realize the lack of control they will have, the level of the violence used against them, and what small percentage of the money they will receive. In one case, a friend introduced a Ukrainian woman to a pimp, who told her she could make US\$2000 a month in a club in the Netherlands where prostitution was optional, but not required. When she arrived in the Netherlands, she was told that prostitution was a requirement and no man could be refused. When she protested, she was raped. She was forced to engage in prostitution seven days a week for three months before she paid off the debt. She feared trying to escape because the pimp knew where to find her at home in Ukraine. When she left she only got 50 percent of what she had been told she had earned.<sup>47</sup>

Even women who voluntarily travel to engage in prostitution do not anticipate the level of manipulation, deception and coercion to which they will be subjected. According to Narcisa Escaler, Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration:

*"...the question of the voluntariness of the movement of trafficked migrants merits particular attention. For many migrants who are eager to escape poverty or political and social insecurity, and who are unaware or unmindful of the pitfalls of irregular migration. ... But, in many instances, trafficked migrants are lured by false promises, misled by misinformation concerning migration regulations, or driven by economic despair or large scale violence. In such cases, the migrant's freedom of choice is so seriously impaired that the "voluntariness" of the transaction must be questioned."*<sup>48</sup>

The networks that traffic women are modern day slave traders. There are even aspects of trafficking in women-such as auctions-that are reminiscent of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century African slave trade. In Milan, Italy in December 1997, police uncovered a gang that was holding auctions of trafficked women from the former Soviet Union. The women were stripped partially naked, displayed and sold for an average price of US\$1000.<sup>49</sup> Traffickers and pimps use extreme violence

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<sup>44</sup> Lily Hyde and Marina Denisenko, "Modern-day slavery traps local women," *Kyiv Post*, 9 October 1997.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Escaler, Statement

<sup>49</sup> Specter, *New York Times*.

to control their women and territory. In Italy, police report that one woman in prostitution is murdered each month.<sup>50</sup> Women are mutilated and murdered as warnings to competing traffickers and pimps and as punishment for refusing to engage in prostitution. In two reported cases, women who resisted were killed as an example to other women. In Istanbul, Turkey, two Ukrainian women were thrown off a balcony and killed, while six of their Russian friends watched. In Serbia, a Ukrainian woman who resisted was beheaded in public.<sup>51</sup>

Levels of violence and discrimination against women trafficked into prostitution are extreme. Trafficked women get little sympathy or assistance once they are under the control of traffickers and pimps, either from the general public or social service agencies. In receiving countries, they are treated as criminals, either as prostitutes or illegal immigrants. When they are discovered, often in police raids, they are arrested or jailed pending deportation. Almost no services exist that address the needs of victims of trafficking who are suffering from trauma, poor health, and physical injuries.

Assistance to victims is hampered by the lack of recognition of the harm to trafficked and prostituted women.<sup>52</sup> Studies on the health of women in the sex industry indicate that many women have serious health problems and are exposed to life-threatening risks. Women suffer from infectious diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, injuries from violence, drug and alcohol addictions, depression, and other mental health problems as a result of trauma.<sup>53</sup>

Many people view the women as complicit in the trafficking, as immoral or as workers - a wide span of perspectives, all of which ignore the harm to the victims. An investigation on trafficking and prostitution in the Czech Republic found that people had little sympathy for victims of trafficking and assumed they were getting rich.

*"It is typical for the Czech post-communist society that it is totally indifferent to the destiny of these victims. Our investigation ... confirms that the brothels operating in small towns and villages in the frontier zones are considered as a 'tax for capitalism' by local inhabitants. Practically nobody is interested in the living conditions of most Ukrainian, Russian and Bulgarian women. This commonplace [sic] is nourished even by the media which present prostitution mostly as a highly 'profitable profession.' ... NGOs which deal with the problems of trafficking in women and their slavery status are considered 'too feministic.'"*<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Norma Hotaling, "Making the harm visible," in *Making the Harm Visible-Global Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls, Speaking Out and Providing Services*, eds. Donna M. Hughes and Claire M. Roche (Kingston, Rhode Island: Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 1999): 227-232. Melissa Farley and Howard Barkan, "Prostitution, violence against women and posttraumatic stress disorder," *Women and Health*, 27 (1998): 37-49. Melissa Farley, Isin Baral, Merab Kiremire and Ufuz Sezgin, "Prostitution in five countries: Violence and posttraumatic stress disorder," *Feminism and Psychology*, 8 (1998): 405-426.

<sup>53</sup> Ruth Parriott, *Health Experiences of Twin Cities Women Used in Prostitution: Survey Findings and Recommendations*, May 1994.

<sup>54</sup> Stanislava Hybnerová and Harald Scheu, *Combat of Trafficking in Women and Forced Prostitution-Czech Republic Country Report* (Vienna, Austria: Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, September 1999), p.8.

Societies and institutions still hold patriarchal attitudes toward women in prostitution, which blame the victims for crimes committed against them. Officials often minimize or deny the severity of the problem, the violence, and coercion used in trafficking and the harm to victims. According to Gennadi Lepenko, Chief of Interpol-Kyiv, Ukraine, "Women's groups want to blow this all out of proportion. Perhaps this was a problem a few years ago. But it's under control now."<sup>55</sup> Advocates for trafficked women report that officials' acceptance of prostitution and trafficking exacerbate the problem. According to Kateryna Levchenko, Coordinator of La Strada-Ukraine, "Complacency on the part of government and law enforcement officials is as much to blame as financial difficulties. Our government bodies cannot understand that it is very, very important for women."<sup>56</sup> Some government officials may be collaborators in trafficking networks. Investigations by the Global Survival Network documented the involvement of government officials in the trafficking of women from Russia.<sup>57</sup> Of course, male officials themselves may be buyers of women in prostitution, resulting in lack of empathy for victims of trafficking and prostitution.

### **Profit and Corruption**

Once a woman is under the control of a trafficker or pimp, she can be exploited to make a large profit. Pimps can make five to 20 times as much from a woman as they paid for her.<sup>58</sup> Research by the International Organization for Migration indicates that trafficked women receive little of the money, but the profits for traffickers are enormous. In a case study of women trafficked into Germany, they found that each time a man buys a woman in prostitution, he pays DM30-50, but the woman gets to keep almost nothing. First, the trafficker or recruiter requires payment of US\$3,000 - \$30,000 for her travel expenses and her purchase price. Then she must pay for her room and board in the brothel, which can be as much as DM280 a day, the pimp's fees, compulsory lawyer's fees, doctor's fees, and sometimes, private living expenses. In the end, the woman often is in debt.<sup>59</sup> Even after a woman has paid off her debt, she must turn over 50 to 75 percent of her earnings to pimps.<sup>60</sup> In numerous documented cases of trafficking, the pimps earn large profits, while the woman receives a small portion of the proceeds.

*A Ukrainian woman in a massage parlor owned by a Russian in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA was allowed to keep only 30 percent of the US\$70 price for a massage. If she wanted more money she had to perform sexual services for tips.<sup>61</sup>*

*During a three-month stay in Germany on a tourist visa, a woman will make \$20,000 for a pimp, according to German police. An Eastern European woman will earn more than that for a pimp or trafficker in Japan, where Eastern European women are considered exotic.<sup>62</sup>*

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<sup>55</sup> Specter, *New York Times*.

<sup>56</sup> Lily Hyde, "Women's groups battle sex slavery," *Kyiv Post*, 23 January 1998.

<sup>57</sup> Global Survival Network, *Crime and Servitude* (Washington, D.C.: Global Survival Network, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*.

<sup>59</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign*.

<sup>60</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*.

<sup>61</sup> Hyde and Denisenko, *Kyiv Post*.

<sup>62</sup> Paringaux, *Le Monde*.

*Oksana Rynievska, a Ukrainian doctor, operated a brothel with non-English speaking women from Eastern Europe in Essex, UK for eight months before she was arrested. During that time she made more than GBP130,000 (US\$210,000).<sup>63</sup>*

Mikhail Lebed, Chief of Criminal Investigations for the Ukrainian Ministry of the Interior said, "It is a human tragedy, but also, frankly, a national crisis. Gangsters make more from these women in a week than we have in our law-enforcement budget for the whole year."<sup>64</sup> The money made from the sexual exploitation and often enslavement of trafficked women enriches transnational criminal networks. Trafficking in women has arguably the highest profit margin and lowest risk of almost any type of illegal activity. According to Michael Platzer, United Nations Center for International Crime Prevention, "There's a lot of talk about drugs, but it's the white slave trade that earns the biggest money for criminal groups in Eastern Europe."<sup>65</sup>

Corruption of officials through bribes and even collaboration of officials in criminal networks enables traffickers to operate in communities and states. Officials in key positions and at many levels use their authority to provide protection to criminal activities. During a two-year investigation of trafficking in women from Russia, the Global Survival Network found evidence of government collaboration in the Interior Ministry, the Federal Security Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>66</sup> As the influence of criminal networks deepens, the corruption goes beyond an act of occasionally ignoring illegal activity to providing protection by blocking legislation that would hinder the activities of the groups. As law enforcement personnel and government officials become more corrupt and members of the crime groups gain more influence, the line between the state and the criminal networks starts to blur. This merging of criminal networks and the government seems to have occurred in many of the states that have emerged from the Soviet Union.<sup>67</sup> Under these circumstances it is difficult to intervene in the succession of corruption, collaboration, crime and profit.

Kateryna Levchenko from La Strada-Ukraine made the following comment about the criminal networks' interests in creating and maintaining an environment favorable to trafficking in women:

*"...the main part of income from this criminal business is obtained by foreign criminal organizations that are the ones interested in preservation of the current situation. They do not want any improvements in the status of Ukrainian women or in Ukrainian economy as a whole. The scale of this illegal business, huge monthly and annual turnovers, merging with certain power structures (first of all, the police) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, make it a real national security issue."<sup>68</sup>*

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<sup>63</sup> "Doctor who ran brothel is jailed," *The Herald* (UK), 4 October 1999.

<sup>64</sup> Hyde, *Kyiv Post*, 23 January 1998.

<sup>65</sup> Paringaux, *Le Monde*.

<sup>66</sup> Vladimir Isachenkov, "Soviet women slavery flourishes," *AP Online*, 6 November 1997.

<sup>67</sup> Brunon Holyst, "Organized crime in Eastern Europe and its implications for the security of the Western world," in *Organized Crime-Uncertainties and Dilemmas*, eds. Stanley Einstein and Menachem Amir (Chicago, Illinois: The Office of International Criminal Justice, 1999): 67-93.

<sup>68</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*.

The cooperation of criminals and corrupt government officials in the trafficking in women ensures that traffickers can operate with little or no interference, leaving women vulnerable to whatever treatment and exploitation is profitable for traffickers and the sex industry.

### ***Impact on Communities***

Trafficking in women as a shadow economy does not bring financial prosperity to local communities. The women often end up with nothing, or any money they earn comes at great cost to their health, emotional well being and standing in the community. The money made by the criminal networks does not stay in poor communities or countries, but is laundered through bank accounts of criminal bosses in financial centers, such United States, Western European countries or in off-shore accounts.<sup>69</sup> Transnational money laundering schemes often include proceeds from trafficking in women.

In Israel, for instance, organized crime groups from the former Soviet Union, collectively referred to as "Russian" organized crime groups, have invested profits from trafficking in women, along with other activities, into legitimate businesses. Israel is considered a "safe haven" for illegal profits because money laundering there is fairly easy. In 1995, it was reported that between 2.5 and 4 billion dollars had been invested in banks and 600 million in real estate.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, trafficking in women has been found to be part of broader transnational criminal schemes. In August 1999, a money-laundering scheme was uncovered in the Bank of New York, USA. From early 1998 until mid-1999, US\$10 billion dollars had been laundered through the bank. The account belonged to known Ukrainian-born crime boss Semion Mogilevich, who the FBI and Israeli intelligence reported was involved in prostitution, weapons and drug trafficking and investment scams. According to one source, Mogilevich headed a large prostitution ring that operated in the Black and White Nightclubs in Prague, Czech Republic and Budapest, Hungary.<sup>71</sup> Mogilevich's crime network, called the Red Mafia, operated in Ukraine, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the United States.<sup>72</sup>

Cases such as these demonstrate that most of the money made from illegal operations, such as trafficking in women, does not make its way back to the community. The money goes to the top where crime bosses make enormous profits. The "dirty money" is laundered into clean money after which it can be used to buy legitimate businesses and properties.

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<sup>69</sup> Ernesto U Savona, "The organizational framework of European crime in the globalization process" (Tokyo, Japan: 108<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on Current Problems in the Combat of Organized Crime, 27 February 1998), Accessed at <http://www.jus.unitn.it/transcrime/papers/wp20.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Menachem Amir, "Organized crime in Israel," in *Organized Crime-Uncertainties and Dilemmas*, eds. Stanley Einstein and Manachem Amir (Chicago, Illinois: Office of International Criminal Justice, 1999): 231-248.

<sup>71</sup> "Les nouvelles mafias d'Europe de l'Est," *Marianne en ligne*, 5 December 1997. Accessed at <http://www.marianne-en-ligne.fr/12-05-97/dessus-b.htm>

<sup>72</sup> Jaroslav Koshiw, "A native son and the Bank of New York scandal," *Kyiv Post*, 26 August 1999.

## Gendered Supply and Demand

Trafficking and prostitution are highly gendered systems that result from structural inequality between women and men on a world scale.<sup>73</sup> Men create the demand and women are the supply.<sup>74</sup> In this gendered system of supply and demand, little or no attention is paid to the legitimacy of the demand. Victims and advocacy groups for survivors of prostitution compare the dynamics of prostitution to battering and sexual assault. Survivors often recount their experiences spent in sex industries as being abusive, degrading, and harmful to their health and well being.<sup>75</sup>

The most crucial factor in determining where trafficking will occur is the activity of traffickers. Poverty, unemployment, inflation, war and lack of a promising future are compelling factors that facilitate the ease with which traffickers recruit women, but they are not the cause of trafficking. Many regions of the world are poor and chaotic, but not every region becomes a major supplier of women trafficked into the sex industry. Traffickers take advantage of poverty, unemployment and a desire to emigrate to recruit and traffic women into sex industries. Women, in large numbers, do not make their way across borders to enter prostitution, nor do they traffic themselves or organize themselves *en masse* to travel internationally to enter prostitution. Women do not voluntarily put themselves in situations where they are exploited, beaten, raped and enslaved. Without recruiters, traffickers and pimps, trafficking in women would not exist. According to Michèle Hirsch, a barrister in Brussels in her report to the Council of Europe:

*"Poverty does not automatically and in every case lead to traffic in human beings and in fact only creates the necessary conditions. ... Trafficking will appear only when criminal elements take advantage of this desire to emigrate to entice people, particularly women, to the West under false pretences."*<sup>76</sup>

More than 120 million people in Eastern Europe earn less than US\$4 per day.<sup>77</sup> Where old Soviet economic systems have been disrupted or discarded, there has been economic contraction and hyperinflation, which has wiped out people's savings and security. In Ukraine, over 60 percent of the unemployed are women, and of those who have lost their job since 1991, more than 80 percent are women. The average salary in Ukraine is about US\$30 a month, but in many small towns, it is only half that.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (New York: New York University Press, 1979); Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

<sup>74</sup> This dynamic is the case for heterosexual prostitution. Exceptions are gay prostitution, men's sexual abuse of boys, the occasional sexual abuse of children by women and the almost non-existent prostitution of men by women.

<sup>75</sup> Norma Hotaling, "What happens to women in prostitution in the United States," in *Making the Harm Visible-Global Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls, Speaking Out and Providing Services*, eds. Donna M. Hughes and Claire M. Roche (Kingston, Rhode Island: Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 1999): 239-251.

<sup>76</sup> Michèle Hirsch, *Plan of Action Against Traffic in Women and Forced Prostitution* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report, 1997* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>78</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign*, pp. 9-11.

Women's NGOs report that the economic hard times has lead to a depression of women's psychological state with loss of self-esteem and hope for the future. Women accept unlikely offers of employment in unskilled jobs at high salaries with the resignation that "it cannot be worse" than their present lives.<sup>79</sup> Recruiters for the sex industry target the most economically depressed areas. According to an estimate by a Ukrainian women's NGO, one-third of unemployed young women get involved in illegal sex businesses.<sup>80</sup>

There also tends to be a paucity of information about the problem in sending countries. MiraMed, an anti-trafficking NGO, asserts that there has been a "relative media blackout" on the subject of trafficking in women, which has left women without information about what is happening to women who have gone abroad.<sup>81</sup>

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a survey of 1,189 women and girls, aged 15 to 35, in ten urban regions of Ukraine. The purpose was to assess women's attitudes and intentions toward migration. The IOM concluded that 40 percent of the women in Ukraine are at risk of becoming victims of trafficking mainly due to their interest in emigrating or seeking employment abroad. Although many young women are eager to travel to seek jobs, prostitution was viewed as absolutely unacceptable. When asked if "a job in the sex industry" was an "acceptable job abroad," none of the women and girls in any age group (Ages 15-17, 18-19, 20-24, 25-35) said yes. When asked if being a "dancer" or "stripper" was an "acceptable job abroad," however, all of the girls aged 15-17 indicated that it was, while none of the older women said yes.<sup>82</sup>

These findings indicate that when accurate naming of activities, such as "job in the sex industry" occurs, rather than the use of euphemisms, such as "hostess" or "entertainer," women are not interested in these "jobs."

### ***Legal Factors and the Demand for Trafficked Women***

Although trafficked women can be found almost anywhere, even in quite unexpected places, the destinations for most trafficked women are countries and cities where there are large sex industry centers and where prostitution is legalized or widely tolerated. Trafficking exists to meet the demand for women to be used in the sex industry. Although some women may appear to voluntarily enter prostitution, this number could never meet the demand. If prostitution were a desirable, rewarding, lucrative job, traffickers would not have to deceive, coerce and enslave women to get them into and keep them in the sex industry.

Most approaches to the problem of trafficking have focused on the sending countries. In countries of the former Soviet Union there have been prevention education projects aimed at potential victims of trafficking and non-governmental organizations have established hotlines for victims of trafficking or women seeking accurate information about the risks of accepting job offers abroad. Less attention has been focused on curtailing the demand created in receiving countries. For example, in Summer 1998, twenty Ukrainian representatives from government ministries, law enforcement, social services, media and non-governmental organizations came to the United States

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<sup>79</sup> Levchenko, *Combat of Trafficking*.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> MiraMed Institute, *Preliminary Survey Report*.

<sup>82</sup> International Organization for Migration, "Slavic women trafficked into slavery," *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, June 1998).

for training on trafficking in women. The site of the conference was New Jersey where hundreds of Ukrainian women have been trafficking into strip clubs and massage parlors. A Special Agent from the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization service told the Ukrainian audience, "This is your problem that you are going to have to solve. Like drugs you have to get at the root of the problem, which is overseas."<sup>83</sup> He located the problem of trafficking of women in the sending country of Ukraine, even though there had been little action against the traffickers and pimps in the receiving country-the United States-or the demand made by the illegal sex industry.

The most popular destinations for trafficked women are countries where prostitution is legal such as the Netherlands and Germany. The Dutch Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) surveyed women in the sex industry in the Netherlands and found they came from 32 countries. In 1994, in the Netherlands, 70 percent of the trafficked women were from Central and Eastern European countries.<sup>84</sup> A survey of women from Central and Eastern Europe found that 80 percent of the women had their passports confiscated, were kept in isolation and forced to work long hours for no pay and were physically and emotionally abused by pimps, traffickers and male buyers.<sup>85</sup>

In the Netherlands, in 1995, more women in prostitution were from Ukraine than any other foreign country and in 1996 they ranked second.<sup>86</sup> According to Dr. Gerben Bruinsma of the University of Leiden, 33 percent of the 25,000 women in prostitution in the Netherlands are from Ukraine, and three percent are from Russia. Most of these women are in conditions of slavery.<sup>87</sup>

In Germany, prostitution is legal for citizens of the European Union, but illegal for non-European Union citizens. Therefore, while it is legal for men to engage in prostitution and for pimps to run brothels, trafficked women are doubly victimized, first by being victims of trafficking and second for being foreign citizens. An estimated one quarter of the 200,000 to 400,000 women in prostitution in Germany are from Eastern Europe.<sup>88</sup> Another source estimates that 80 percent of the trafficked women in Germany are from Central and Eastern Europe and CIS countries. The German Family Ministry reported that 1500 trafficked women were caught by police in 1997. Ninety-five percent were deported.<sup>89</sup>

Legalization of prostitution, pimping and brothels causes an increase in trafficking in women to meet the demand created by a legalized sex industry. There is also evidence from

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<sup>83</sup> Personal notes from "Training Program to Combat Trafficking of Women from Ukraine," July 1998.

<sup>84</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Trafficking and Prostitution: The Growing Exploitation of Migrant Women from Central and Eastern Europe* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, May 1995), [http://www.iom.ch/IOM/Publications/books\\_studies\\_surveys/MIP\\_traff\\_women\\_eng.htm](http://www.iom.ch/IOM/Publications/books_studies_surveys/MIP_traff_women_eng.htm)

<sup>85</sup> Hyde and Denisenko, *Kyiv Post*.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Louise Shelley, "Human Trafficking: Defining the Problem," *Organized Crime Watch - Russia* Vol. 1, No. 2, February 1999 (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Transnational Crime and Corruption at American University).

<sup>88</sup> Irena Omelaniuk and Ginette Baerten, "Trafficking in women from Central and Eastern Europe - Focus on Germany," in *Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1999 Review*. (Vienna: International Organization for Migration and International Center for Migration Policy Development, March 1999).

<sup>89</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign*.

Australia that legalized prostitution and brothels resulted in a “significant rise in organized crime”<sup>90</sup> and an increase in trafficking and enslavement of women.<sup>91</sup>

Legalized prostitution makes it difficult to hold traffickers accountable for their activities. Trijntje Kootstra, from La Strada, said that traffickers evade prosecution by claiming the women knew what they were getting into and that prosecutors generally have a hard time establishing the line between voluntary and forced prostitution.<sup>92</sup> When prostitution is legal the prosecution’s case depends on proving that the woman did not consent. Considering how vulnerable the women are in these slave-like circumstances and that women often do initially consent to traveling or even being in prostitution, it makes the case much more difficult to prove. According to Michael Platzer, Head of Operations for the United Nation’s Center for International Crime Prevention, “The laws help the gangsters. Prostitution is semi-legal in many places and that makes enforcement tricky. In most cases punishment is very light.”<sup>93</sup> In the Plan of Action Against Traffic in Women and Forced Prostitution for the Council of Europe, Michele Hirsch stated, “where only forced prostitution is illegal; inability to prove constraint has repeatedly led to international procurers being acquitted by the courts.”<sup>94</sup>

The trafficking of women for purposes of sexual exploitation is not a new phenomenon and international laws were drafted and ratified in the earlier half of this century. In 1949, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. The convention states that “prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and endanger the welfare of the individual, the family and the community.”<sup>95</sup> Ukraine is a signature of the 1949 Convention (1954), along with Latvia (1992), Belarus (1956), and the Russian Federation (1954).<sup>96</sup> The 1949 Convention states that consent of the trafficked person is irrelevant to the prosecution of the exploiter.<sup>97</sup> The 1949 Convention was not widely ratified and did not create a monitoring body, so there has been no ongoing evaluation of its implementation or effectiveness. In 1998 at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women’s Organizations and World Movement of Mothers called for governments to work toward suppressing the trafficking of women and girls and implementing the 1949 Convention.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Andreas Schloenhardt, *Organized Crime and the Business of Migrant Trafficking-An Economic Analysis* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 10 November 1999).

<sup>91</sup> Debra Way, “Number of sex slaves in Australia quadruples,” *Australian Associated Press*, 9 December 1999.

<sup>92</sup> Hyde, *Kyiv Post*, 23 January 1998.

<sup>93</sup> Specter, *New York Times*.

<sup>94</sup> Hirsch, *Plan of Action*.

<sup>95</sup> Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, <http://www.uri.edu/dignity/49conven.htm>

<sup>96</sup> Status of Ratification, Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, [http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/final/ts2/newfiles/past\\_boo/vii\\_boo/vii\\_boo/vii11.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/final/ts2/newfiles/past_boo/vii_boo/vii_boo/vii11.html)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “Statement submitted by the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women’s Organizations and World Movement of Mothers, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic

Currently, the 1949 Convention is under strong attack by those who favor legalized prostitution and “consensual trafficking.” The trend toward legalization of the sex industry and narrower definitions of trafficking which require proof of coercion or force will make the conviction of traffickers very difficult and will greatly benefit transnational criminal networks.

Another approach to ending trafficking is to intervene in the demand for women to be used in prostitution. In 1998, Sweden passed a law on violence against women that created a new offense-“gross violation of a woman’s integrity.” Prostitution was included as a type of violence against women. As of January 1, 1999, the “purchase of sexual services” was prohibited, punishable by fines and/or imprisonment up to six months. The Swedish government was clear that this new offense marked Sweden’s attitude toward prostitution as an “undesirable social phenomenon” and an act of violence against women.<sup>99</sup> The new offense of gross violation of a woman’s integrity and the prohibition on purchase of sexual services aims to eliminate acts of violence that stand in the way of equality for women.

Sweden’s approach recognizes the harm done to women under conditions of sexual exploitation. Their approach starts from the premise that women have the right to dignity, integrity and equality. This new law is the first that aims to protect women from violence by holding men accountable and thereby addressing the demand for women to be trafficked for prostitution. There are indications that Norway is also considering this approach as a way to combat the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.<sup>100</sup>

## Summary

In the Soviet Union, a shadow economy, often controlled by government officials, existed for decades to meet the needs of the people for goods and services. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the shadow economy networks expanded to become transnational criminal networks that increasingly operate beyond the reach of law enforcement in any one state, and more ominously, operate in cooperation with law enforcement and government officials in some states. One of the commodities that is in great demand and Ukraine, and other republics of the Soviet Union, have in great supply, are women who were eager to travel and look for opportunities abroad. The trafficking of women for purposes of sexual exploitation has become a highly profitable shadow market for organized crime networks. The lucrative trade in women garners billions of dollars for criminals, who use the money to enrich themselves and buy influence to further their activities. Although organized crime networks have benefited, trafficking in women is not a shadow economy that has brought prosperity to local communities. The growth in number and size of organized crime networks has become a threat to the safety of citizens and to legitimate economic, social, and political institutions.

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and Social Council,” Commission on the Status of Women, Forty-second session, 2-13 March 1999. The statement was also signed by Zona International, the National Council on Family Relations, the International Union of Family Organizations, the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations, the Women’s International Democratic Federation, the International Health Awareness Network, the International Federation on Ageing, World Information Transfer, the International Alliance on Women, and the Global Alliance for Women’s Health.

<sup>99</sup> Violence Against Women, *Kvinnofrid*, <http://www.kvinnofrid.gov.se/regeringen/faktaeng.htm>

<sup>100</sup> Personal communication with non-governmental organizations in Norway.

Trafficking in women is a modern day slave trade that is consuming increasing numbers of women, especially from Ukraine and other republics of the former Soviet Union. Most analyses of trafficking in women focus on the supply side in the sending countries, with economic factors assumed to be the primary cause of trafficking. A more complete understanding of trafficking in women is achieved by also examining the demand for trafficked women in sex industries in receiving countries and the essential role played by organized crime networks in committing serious crimes against women. In addition, the gendered nature of the dynamics of the supply and demand has to be examined. It cannot be ignored that women are the sole victims in trafficking in women for prostitution and men are the sole players in creating the demand for women in prostitution.

Legalization of prostitution is sometimes thought to be a solution to trafficking in women, but evidence seems to show that legalized sex industries actually result in increased trafficking to meet the demand for women to be used in the legal sex industries. Increased activity of organized crime networks also accompanies increases in trafficking.

Legal remedies that address the demand side of trafficking have been passed at the international level at the United Nations and the national level in Sweden. The older 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others has not been widely ratified and lacks a monitoring body, so it has had limited impact against the transnational trafficking of women. The newly defined type of violence against women and crime in Sweden "the purchase of sexual services" has only been in place for one year and its effectiveness is yet to be evaluated.

Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become such a large and severe crisis for the well being of women and the security and stability of some states that interventions are needed at all levels and points in the trafficking process.

# Research Findings on Trafficking in Women from Ukraine for Sexual Exploitation

Tatyana Denisova, Donna M. Hughes, Sergey Denisov, Sergey Demenko, Victoria Palchenkova, Volodimir Bilkun, Paul Serdyuk, Kelly Brooks, and Amy Potenza

As detailed in the previous section, trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation is a serious problem in Ukraine affecting 100,000s of victims and their families. The profits from buying and selling women and children have attracted organized crime networks and corrupt officials. This section will describe the research goals and the findings from almost two years of research.

## ***Research Goals***

The aim of the research partnership between Donna M. Hughes and Tatyana Denisova and her colleagues was to research trafficking in women and children from Ukraine for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The research aimed to:

- 1) Characterize the victims of trafficking.
- 2) Characterize the perpetrators of trafficking and their organizations, such as size, structure, and organization of the gangs and networks.
- 3) Determine if there are links among drug trafficking, trafficking in women and children and other forms of organized crime. Determine if there are links to international crime and international organized crime networks.
- 4) Determine if there are links between sex industries inside Ukraine and the international trafficking in women and children. Characterize the links. Characterize regional specializations in destinations of trafficked women and the type of sexual exploitation in which they will be used.
- 5) Determine if existing legal instruments exist to effectively combat the trafficking of women and children for purposes of sexual exploitation.

## ***Methods of Data Collection***

Data was collected through interviews and surveys in Ukraine, and from online (Web) searches in the United States. Researchers from Ukraine examined 46 criminal cases of trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation and statistical data from the several Ministries and agencies. They conducted a survey of 556 people on their attitudes toward and knowledge of trafficking of women. They conducted another survey of 160 young women graduates of high schools, colleges, and gymnasiums who would comprise a high-risk category for recruitment by traffickers. They interviewed Ukrainian and international experts who had knowledge of victims and perpetrators of trafficking. They collected materials from various sources inside Ukraine, and from the countries of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Latvia, Turkey, Japan, and the United States.

The researchers in Ukraine incurred risks while collecting this data. In one instance, a pimp threatened one of the research assistants for trying to talk to the women. Most of the sources spoke to the researchers on the condition that they remain anonymous, including their affiliation with any official office or agency. Therefore, they can be identified only in the broadest of terms in this report.

### **Factors Contributing to the Trafficking of Women from Ukraine**

A combination of factors subsequently related to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of Ukraine as an independent state have facilitated the trafficking of women from Ukraine.

The end of the Soviet Union opened the borders among states and allowed the migration of people from state to state. During the period from 1991 to 1999, 2,162,000 people left Ukraine for permanent residence abroad, of which 491,395 people went to European countries and USA.<sup>101</sup> There was some immigration to Ukraine from other former Soviet republics, but from 1994 to 2000, the population of Ukraine decreased by 90,000 people per year due to emigration. Within the last year, the rate of emigration has slowed to one quarter the number of previous years. Also, a significant number of people have left Ukraine illegally, many of them to work abroad. There is no data on how many Ukrainian citizens reenter Ukraine after they have left. In 2000, the number leaving the country decreased, indicating that stabilization was starting to occur. The trend to leave Ukraine, either temporarily or permanently, has facilitated the trafficking of women.

Ukraine is a transit country for illegal migrants trying to reach Western Europe, and points beyond, such as the United States and Canada. Therefore, the flow of people is generally from east to west. Each year there are thousands of people arrested for attempting to enter Ukraine using false documents.<sup>102</sup> Most of this migration is human smuggling, not trafficking in women. Although some women may be trafficked for sexual exploitation among this transit population, they are more likely to come from other source countries. For example, in 1998, women from Sierra Leone on their way to the sex industry in Germany were intercepted in Ukraine.<sup>103</sup>

Within the period of economic decline, increased unemployment, and legal and illegal migration, Ukraine became a source country for women trafficked for sexual exploitation. The number of women trafficked from Ukraine for a purpose of sexual exploitation is unknown. Statistics that could be used to "guesstimate" the numbers are partial, and lack the specificity needed to make estimates. From 1995 to 2000, approximately 400,000 women under the age of 30 left Ukraine. No one knows how many of those women may have been trafficked, although one estimate is 100,000.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Correspondence with Stanislav Malkin, May 2001.

<sup>102</sup> In March 2001, Victor Kirik, Head of the Consul Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that 11,744 people in 1998, 14,644 in 1999, and 5,422 in 2000 were arrested for attempting to enter Ukraine using false documents from Russia, the Middle Asia republics, Azerbaijan, and other countries.

<sup>103</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, December 1998, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> Nina Ivanovna Karpacheva, "The status and adherence and protection of the human rights and freedoms in Ukraine," 2000. Karpacheva is a representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

## **Employment Abroad**

As unemployment has risen and wages declined (the average monthly wage in 2000 was 229 Hryvnias or US\$42) more Ukrainians are seeking work abroad, either legally or illegally. In 2001, there are 2000 companies registered in Ukraine to arrange employment abroad. In 1999, 33,000 people were sent to work abroad through these agencies. In 1999, 125 agencies had their licenses to operate cancelled because they failed to pass an official inspection. In 2000, 300 agencies were inspected and 14 of them lost their licenses for various violations.<sup>105</sup>

Some states (Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Russia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Vietnam) have inter-governmental agreements with Ukraine for mutual employment of citizens. There is an agreement between Ukraine and other former Soviet Republics on migrant workers and protections of those workers. There are statistics for Ukrainians officially registered to work abroad, but many Ukrainians are working abroad illegally, consequently the actual number is considerably higher than the official number. Some people leave Ukraine illegally or on tourist visas, and then remain in the destination countries to work illegally. For example: 15,000 Ukrainians went to Spain and stayed there illegally from 1998 to 1999.<sup>106</sup> There is no data on how many Ukrainians may be working abroad illegally, but estimates range from 500,000 to 2,000,000 people for the period 1991-1999.<sup>107</sup>

Ukrainians working abroad illegally are vulnerable to exploitation and crimes against them. For example: 60,000 to 80,000 Ukrainians have gone to Poland to work in construction (men) and agriculture (women). In 1998, 3,000 Ukrainians reported to the Ukrainian Consulate in Poland that they had been the victims of a crime.<sup>108</sup> According to the NGO La Strada-Ukraine, 70 percent of the Ukrainian women working in Poland were involved in the sex industry, many of the "under duress."<sup>109</sup>

Police who were interviewed said that for women in Ukraine there is no way to earn money because of lack of jobs. Even though they have good educations, there is no possibility for them to find work. They said that men often do not support their families, so the responsibility falls to the women who must find a way. They seek work abroad and become vulnerable to being trafficking into prostitution and other forms of exploitation.

## **Sexual Exploitation in Ukraine**

In order to learn more about the sex industry, the trafficking of women, and the connections between the sexual exploitation of women inside Ukraine and abroad, we interviewed a range of people about sexual exploitation and prostitution in Ukraine.

The sexual exploitation of women in prostitution has risen sharply following the independence of Ukraine. From 1996-2000, 381 persons were convicted for keeping a brothel or

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<sup>105</sup> Nikolai Zhulynsky, Vice-Premier Minister of Ukraine, *Zagranitsa*, No. 8, 2001 (Correspondence with Stanislav Malkin, May 2001).

<sup>106</sup> Nina Ivanovna Karpacheva, "The status and adherence and protection of the human rights and freedoms in Ukraine," 2000. Karpacheva is a representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

<sup>107</sup> Correspondence with Stanislav Malkin

<sup>108</sup> Nina Ivanovna Karpacheva, "The status and adherence and protection of the human rights and freedoms in Ukraine," 2000. Karpacheva is a representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

<sup>109</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, January 1999, p. 9.

pimping, the majority, 173, was arrested in 2000, showing a significant increase from previous years.<sup>110 111</sup> (See Table 1.)

A criminal forensic scientist was interviewed about the ways pimps involve women in prostitution in Ukraine. Overall, the economic situation in Ukraine has resulted in many hardships for all people. There are many deaths due to alcoholism, drugs, and homicide. He said that pimps frequently use drugs and alcohol to get women under their influence and control. The victim's husband or brother may be the pimp, which makes manipulation and coercion of the girl or woman easier. He cited cases in which women who refused to cooperate with pimps were mutilated and/or murdered. The *Crime Digests* compiled by Ukrainian Police for the Regional Security Office of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv list several examples of murders of women and men in prostitution rings resulting from conflicts between criminal gangs. For example, in May 1998, police investigated the murder of five people (three men and two women) in Dnipropetrovsk. The women were known prostitutes.<sup>112</sup> Later reports indicated that they were killed when the owners of a sauna refused to pay protection money to a crime gang.<sup>113</sup>

**Table 1**

**Crimes Related to Violence and Exploitation of Women in Ukraine, 1996 to 2000**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
<b>Total Crimes Registered</b>	617,262	589,208	575,982	558,716	567,795	
<b>Kidnapping (Article 124)</b>						
Crimes registered	22	17	20	28	26	113
Cases completed	15	6	12	19	13	65
Criminals detected	11	6	10	22	1	66
Crimes still not detected	5	7	3	9	11	
<b>Running a brothel (Article 210)</b>						
Crimes registered	82	50	47	98	194	471
Cases completed	75	51	34	76	139	375
Criminals detected	24	41	40	103	173	381
Crimes still not detected	3	5	6	6	14	

Sources: Ministry of Interior of Ukraine, Forms No. 1, 1-G and 2.

A pediatrician who was interviewed indicated that child sexual abuse has increased over the past decade. She is seeing girls aged 10 to 12 who are being sexually abused and exploited by

<sup>110</sup> Conviction under Article 210 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

<sup>111</sup> Correspondence with Stanislav Malkin, May 2001.

<sup>112</sup> *Kiev Post*, p. 3, as cited in Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, *Crime Digest*, May 1998, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Kievski Vedomosti*, p. 4, as cited in Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, *Crime Digest*, May 1998, p. 3.

adults. Younger girls are starting to smoke and use alcohol. The perpetrators use the girls' interest and eventual addictions to manipulate and control them. The physician is seeing an increase in suicide attempts in girls and attributes it to sexual abuse and exploitation.

In order to learn more about the sexual exploitation of women inside Ukraine and the possible connection to trafficking, we interviewed women in prostitution in Ukraine. Women from circumstances and locations of prostitution were chosen. The women in the worst circumstances were women who stood along a major highway. They were known to be narcotics addicts. Two other women in better circumstances in a nightclub and in the city center were also interviewed.

Six narcotics addicted women were interviewed individually at a police station in Zaporizhia. All six women were picked up by the police for possession of narcotics, and were known to be prostitutes who worked along a major highway. According to police, about 15 to 20 women stand along this stretch of highway each day. The women are regularly picked-up by the police for possession of narcotics. Some of the women are taken to the hospital to see if they are ill. (This probably means being tested for sexually transmitted infections.) There was no indication if the examinations were voluntary, or if the women were compelled to have the examinations by the police. If the women are found to be in possession of narcotics, they are brought to the police station, where the police talked to them about the harm and risks of drugs. When asked if the talks were ever successful in getting the women to quit, the detective replied that they were not.

Six of the seven women arrested that day for possession of narcotics agreed to be interviewed. A police detective remained in the room during the interviews. During the interview the women kept their head and eyes downcast most of the time. They sat hunched forward, and hugged themselves with their arms. Some looked quite ill. Some were dirty and had poor dental hygiene, including visible cavities or missing teeth. A couple of them were nicely dressed, but most had shabby clothing, with one or two nice articles. One had a new looking coat. According to police, all were narcotics addicts, who supported their addictions from prostitution.

The six women ranged in age from 21 to 29. The women said they had been in prostitution for one to four years. Other sources said that most of the women who claimed they had been in prostitution for a year, had been in longer than that, but preferred to minimize the length of time. They earn about \$10 per day, with half of that going to the pimp, and \$3 to \$5 per day for drugs.

Each woman described her life previously, and what she felt contributed to her use of narcotics:

*My parents were alcoholics. I began using drugs when I was 16. [She is now 29] I have a daughter to support, and my husband is in prison.*

*I lost both of my parents when I was 11, and I lived with my aunt. I've used drugs since I was 20. [She is now 28.]*

*My parents divorced. I've used drugs since I was 20. [She is now 25] My husband made me use drugs. He's now in prison.*

*I've used narcotics for three years. [She is now 25] My husband is in prison for robbery, and he also used drugs. He convinced me to use drugs.*

*I've taken drugs for six years. [She is now 21] My husband didn't work and took money from me. I eventually left him.*

*I've used drugs since I was 16 [She is now 28] I had a husband who used drugs, and he tried to take money from me, so I divorced him. I was in prison for theft for a year and a half several years ago.*

A common experience among these women was the loss of their parents from death, divorce, or alcoholism. They referred to this as a critical loss in their lives. Several women had husbands who used drugs and introduced them to drugs. Several of the women said their husbands were now in prison, or they had to leave their husbands to escape their exploitation of them for money. Several of the women said they had one or two children to support.

The women said they made efforts to stop using drugs:

*My parents tried to put me in the hospital for treatment because I used drugs. I did go once, but it was not successful.*

*I have a boyfriend. He proposed and said he would marry me, if I stopped using drugs. But, I haven't been able to stop.*

*I've been to the hospital twice for drug treatment, but I wasn't able to stop.*

The women said there were in prostitution as a result of drug addictions and lost employment:

*I lost my job at the plant. I have a child, but no husband.*

*I have been in prison twice for stealing from apartments. After leaving prison the first time, I tried to find a job, but I couldn't. I turned to prostitution.*

*I used to have a job, but after my daughter was born, I lost my job.*

All of the women said it was difficult and frightening to be prostitution along the highway. Two said they were "afraid." All six of the women said men had beaten them. One woman said she had been beaten three times that year. One woman said that she preferred to go out to the highway during the day, as she was less afraid than at night. As a precaution, one woman said that she never went with men younger than 25, because they were too violent, and tried to take their money back. Two of the women said that men frequently stole money from them. The women's fears are valid. In one case in Kyiv in 1999, a man was arrested after a prostitute reported to police that he attempted to kill her. After being arrested, the man confessed to killing 12 women who worked on the road outside Kyiv.<sup>114</sup>

None of the women admitted to having a pimp, but other sources said that all of them did. The pimps drive them out to the roadside and pick them up later. They are instructed by the pimps never to reveal to the police that they have a pimp.

Addiction to narcotics and prostitution are intertwined problems. Although, most people assume the women are in prostitution to support their addiction, women also point out that having unwanted sex with multiple men per day is so difficult that they need the drugs to do it. One woman said, "I'm ashamed, but when I have the drugs, I can do it." Another said, "I couldn't be in prostitution without using drugs."

The detective at the station said that since prostitution is not considered a crime, no one is trying to stop the prostitution along the highways, either to assist the women, or stop the men from picking up the women. The police are only interested in the narcotics trade.

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<sup>114</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, August 1999, p. 4.

Two women who were in prostitution in the Zaporizhia city center and in local clubs were interviewed as representatives of “higher class” prostitution than the narcotics addicted women on the highway. The women were known by the police to be in prostitution. A policeman approached the women and asked if they were willing to come for an interview. The women were interviewed in a private room without the presence of the police officer. These women appeared to be healthier, better dressed, less depressed and exhausted than the narcotics addicted women who were interviewed.

Each described her life prior to entering prostitution:

[26 year old woman, works in a nightclub] *My parents are divorced and I live with my mother. I was a 3<sup>rd</sup> year mathematics student at the university, but I was expelled. I started working in a market, but it was hard work standing all day. In the winter, my feet would get cold. It was dirty, and I had to stay there from 7 am until 3 pm. One day, a man suggested that I work as a prostitute. I was horrified at the idea. The man knew the pimp, so later I accepted. I decided to be a prostitute for one year, save US\$2000, and then start a business in another city. I hope to meet a Western European man and get married, but only to a Western European.*

[21 year old woman, works in the city center] *I have been in prostitution for two years. I have a three-year-old son. I used to work in a café where I earned US\$20 per month. My son needed an operation that cost US\$40. I didn't have the money. I walked and walked around the city to decide what to do. I knew some women who worked on the street. They suggested that I be a prostitute. I decided to do it. I earned enough money for my son's operation the first day.*

The two women described the organization of the prostitution in the nightclub and city center. The woman who works in a nightclub said it is the working space for a hierarchy of pimps and women. The head of the prostitution ring is a 34 years old woman referred to as the “owner.” She organizes the prostitution within the club and pays the nightclub owner for using the space, referred to as “administrative costs.” The “owner” reserves rooms for prostitution in local hotels and checks the men's passports. Below the “owner” is the “manager,” aged 24. She oversees 22 women and finds men for the women. She coordinates the activities with the “owner.” The prostitute collects US\$30 from each man, and the pimp, referred to as a “manager” takes US\$20. When the pimp proposed this arrangement at the beginning, the woman we interviewed thought it sounded like a good deal, so she agreed. The women are required to pay “fines” if they break any rules. The fine for being late is US\$100. If they are ill and cannot work, the fine is US\$150, unless they get a certificate from a doctor. The system of excessive fines for breaking rules is characteristic of how pimps control women in prostitution and take back money the women have earned.

The woman in prostitution in the city center works with a small group of women. They have a pimp, or “bodyguard,” as she called him, who defends them. He takes 50 percent of their earnings. Their first pimp was arrested for pimping and is in prison. The women liked him because he did not allow drug-addicted women into their territory. The woman we interviewed said the drug-addicted women take less money, so the price will come down. Also, she said they steal from the men, who then get mad and blame all the women in that area. Now, they have another “bodyguard.” The women rely on him to protect them from young men in the neighborhood who like to kidnap, beat, and rape them. She said the young men do not consider prostitutes people. She charges US\$15/hour, and earns US\$40-\$50 per night.

Although the women in the nightclub and city center appear to be better protected than the women out on the highway, they are still victims of sexual assault, battering, and even torture. The woman in the nightclub said that when she first agreed to be a prostitute she was afraid. The pimp took her to the first man. She was ordered to take off her clothes, and she couldn't refuse. She cried as she described this experience, which sounded like a rape. In her agreement with the pimps she is supposed to be able allowed to refuse group sex and anal sex. On one occasion, two men from another city took her to a hotel. Ahead of time, they had agreed on what she would do, but upon her arrival, they forced her "to do everything."

The woman who works in the city center said that several months before our interview, a man picked her up and paid her US\$30 for two hours. When they got to the flat, he tied her up and tortured her by burning her with cigarettes and writing on her with a razor blade. After two hours, he let her go. The day before the interview, she said that five young men came in one car. They demanded that she get in the car. When she refused, they grabbed her hair and started to pull her into the car. The bodyguard-pimp was able to intervene and pulled her away from the men.

The narcotics-addicted women on the highway said they needed the drugs to do the prostitution as much as they needed prostitution to support their addiction. The women from the nightclub and the city center used other substances to cope with the unwanted sex with multiple men. The woman from the city center said that each day before they went to the street she and the other women from the street gathered at a café. They drank a bottle of vodka or cognac to get ready for the prostitution. She said, "It would be impossible to work without alcohol." The woman from the nightclub said that she doesn't use drugs or alcohol to cope, but afterwards she smokes cigarettes heavily and dances in the club to forget.

We asked these two women about their future. Although the woman from the city center earned the money she needed for her son's operation, which was the reason she became a prostitute, she continued in prostitution. She said it changed her. She said that once a woman is in prostitution in a small city, everyone knows it, and knows what she is. She doesn't see any alternatives. Also, she feels that the scars from being beaten and tortured mark her as a prostitute. The woman from the nightclub who planned to earn enough money in one year to start a business admits she has no savings. She has spent some money on furniture and appliances for her flat. She gives a little money to her mother. Also, she has to buy clothes and cosmetics to look nice at the club. She admits that she doesn't know what kind of business she'd like to start or what city to move to. Still, she is said she will only be in prostitution one year, but that time has probably already gone. Several days after the interview, she returned to talk to Tatyana Denisova about alternatives to prostitution. She said that giving the interview gave her hope because it showed that someone cared about women like her. Prior to that she didn't think anyone cared.

## ***Transnational Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation***

### **Official Cases of Trafficking in Women from Ukraine**

There is conflicting information on how many criminal cases of trafficking there are. The number ranges from 28 to 44. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (form No. 10) there have been 37 cases initiated under the Article 124-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

In 1998, Ukraine updated their criminal law against trafficking in human beings. During 1999 and 2000, 44 criminal cases were opened on trafficking in human beings (10 criminal cases in 1999 and 34 criminal cases in 2000). (See Table 2.) There were 27 cases completed and transferred

to courts (4 cases in 1999 and 23 cases in 2000), 18 people were brought to criminal liability on those cases (almost all of them are under arrest), three cases were postponed because the accused are under search and 14 cases, as of January 2001, are still under proceedings.<sup>115</sup>

**Table 2**

**Trafficking of Human Beings in Ukraine, 1996 to 2000**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Total Crimes Registered	617,262	589,208	575,982	558,716	567,795	
<b>Trafficking in human beings</b>						
<b>(Article 124-1)</b>						
Crimes registered				10	34	44
Cases under investigation				10	39	49
Cases completed				4	23	27
Criminals detected				3	18	21
Crimes still not detected				2	1	3

Sources: Ministry of Interior of Ukraine, Forms No. 1, 1-G and 2.

There is no information yet on the number of persons to be sentenced, because the court statistics registers only those already sentenced. Statistics for crimes committed are registered under the most serious crime if there are multiple crimes. Therefore, some of the persons are sentenced for extortion or robbery, even though they are guilty of violation of the anti-trafficking law. The 2000 report shows only one person convicted under Article 124-1, all the others involved in trafficking are registered under other crime categories.

The first case of trafficking charged under Article 124-1 was in Kamianets Podilskij. Police intercepted a tour bus traveling from Kmelnytski to a brothel in Istanbul, Turkey. The passengers, ranging in age from 18 to 20, were from several different regions and varying educational backgrounds. The 25-year-old trafficker was formerly a prostitute who realized that she could make more money by trading women. She recruited the women, often with the assistance of the women's boyfriends.<sup>116</sup>

In 1999 in Sevastopol, the local police completed the investigation of a case in which three persons were accused of trafficking 200 women and girls (aged 13 to 25) from Ukraine. They received US\$2000 for each woman they delivered to clubs in Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. The traffickers operated under the tour company "Sight," and delivered the women by ship.<sup>117</sup> The traffickers were sentenced under Article 194 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, which is counterfeiting of documents.

<sup>115</sup> Statistic reports, from 1-G on crime, correspondence from Stanislav Malkin.

<sup>116</sup> Regional Security Report, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, January 1999, p. 10.

<sup>117</sup> Regional Security Report, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, March 1999, p. 6.

In May 2001, the Institute of the Attorney General's Office held a seminar on methods of investigation of criminal cases related to trafficking in human beings. Twenty-three cases were reviewed, 10 of which had been completed and transferred to court. In these cases, 43 people were accused of crimes under Article 124-1 (Trafficking in Human Beings), of whom 26 were found guilty, and seven sentenced to imprisonment. Three of the criminals were found guilty of extortion and other crimes besides trafficking in human beings, and they are registered in court statistics under other categories. Members of the criminal networks that remain abroad have not been apprehended and continue their activities of trafficking and pimping women.<sup>118</sup>

The cases reviewed were investigated by the following oblast regional prosecutor's office:

Donetsk	7
Crimea	4
Zaporozhia	2
Cherkassy	2
Kyiv	2
Odessa	1
Kherson	1
Chernigiv	1
Ternopil	1

During the time these criminals operated, they trafficked 330 Ukrainian women. Most of the women were trafficked to Turkey, but some were trafficked to Greece, Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and United Arab Emirates. In the case in Chernigiv, three traffickers sold 16 women to Italian and Spanish brothels in Hungary for US \$800 a piece.<sup>119</sup> In the destination countries, local pimps received the women and distributed them to clubs and bars, where the women were forced into prostitution.<sup>120</sup>

According to the Consul Services Department of the Diplomatic Representations and Consul Departments of Ukraine, during 1999 and 2000 the Embassies of Ukraine registered the following incidents of Ukrainian women trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation: In Turkey, 3 in 1999 and 16 in 2000; in Greece, 3 in 1999 and 2 in 2000; in Croatia, 16 in 1999 and 24 in 2000; and in Israel, 3 in 1999 and 26 in 2000. According to police, 1,000 Ukrainian women have been deported back to Ukraine for prostitution abroad.<sup>121</sup>

According to Nina Karpacheva, Representative of Verkhovna Rada, women from Ukraine are known to be in sex industries in Turkey, Italy, Spain, Germany, former Yugoslavian countries, Hungary, Czech Republic, Greece, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Israel, and the United States. According to the Consul Departments of Ukraine, in 1998, there were 6,000 Ukrainian women trafficked to Turkey, 3,000 to Greece, and 1,000 to Serbia.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Correspondence from Stanislav Malkin, May 2001.

<sup>119</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, August 1999, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> Correspondence from Stanislav Malkin, May 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Victor Kirik, Head of the Consul Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Zagranitsa*, Nox 10, May 2001. (Correspondence from Stanislav Malkin, May 2001.)

<sup>122</sup> Nina Ivanovna Karpacheva, "The status and adherence and protection of the human rights and freedoms in Ukraine," 2000. Karpacheva is a representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

## Source Regions for Recruitment and Trafficking of Women

Women are being recruited and trafficked from almost all regions of Ukraine. According to official data, in 1998, under the pretext of employment abroad, 158 women and girls are known to be trafficked abroad: 60 from Ivano-Frankovsk, 48 from Lugansk, 30 from Khmelnytskyi, 12 from Zaporizhia, and 7 from Nikolaev. The actual numbers are unknown, but are much higher. Researchers who interviewed law enforcement sources found that the greatest number of women trafficked for sexual exploitation come from the following oblasts: Lugansk, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Donetsk, Kherson, Nikolaev, Odessa, Kiev, Cherkassy, Ternopol, Ivano-Frankovsk, and Lvov. According to Ukrainian Police in 2000, the city of Kyiv is one of the top seven suppliers of women for prostitution in Europe.<sup>123</sup>

Women from different regions of Ukraine are likely to be trafficked to different destination countries. From the western regions of Ukraine (Lvov, Ivano-Frankovsk, Khmelnytskyi and Chernovtsy oblasts), women are trafficked mostly to the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Kosovo), Bulgaria and Germany. From the northern regions (Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava, and Sumy oblasts), women are most often trafficked to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Holland. From the southern regions (Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Nikolaev, Kherson, and Odessa oblasts), women are taken to Turkey, Greece, Italy, Romania, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Syria, and Germany. Because the Crimea is a resort area, many women from Ukraine are in prostitution there, especially in the summer. It is a good site to recruit women to go abroad. From the eastern regions (Donetsk, Kharkov, and Lugansk oblasts), women are most often taken to Russia, and then to countries of Western Europe, China, and Japan. The destination of women who are first taken to Russia is usually Western European countries because of Russian organized crime connections to criminal gangs in those countries that control prostitution and pornography. Taking women to Russia is one of the easiest ways to traffic women out of Ukraine because of the ease of crossing the border by train. Also, no visa is required to travel to Russia. Women from eastern regions are also taken through Georgia to countries of the Near East.

## Transit and Destination Countries

Ukrainian women are often taken to intermediary or transit countries before reaching their final destinations. In a transit country, such as Russia or Poland, the women are provided with travel documents. Sometimes the documents are authentic having been issued by corrupt officials who take bribes or who collaborate with traffickers; other times, they are counterfeit. From there, the women may pass through other transit countries. Because of the difficulty getting visas for the United States, Ukrainian women who are destined for the U.S. often pass through several transit countries, such as Poland, Israel, Greece, or Turkey, then travel to Mexico or Canada, before entering the U.S.

Women sometimes travel over land and cross borders illegally. Some women are known to illegally cross into Poland, and then travel on to Germany. One woman from Zaporizhia, who was deported from Germany, had forded the river between Poland and Germany.

Passing through several transit countries makes it more difficult to trace women. Relatives of victims, who are looking for lost women, often lose the trail when the women pass through transit countries, like Poland. For example, one woman, trafficked to Italy, reported that she was taken to the Serbian border where she was sold to Serbians, from there she was taken to Montenegro, and

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<sup>123</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, April 2000, p. 3.

there sold to Albanians, who took her to Italy.<sup>124</sup> It is easier to find them when the women go directly to a destination country. During the time spent in transit countries victims are often introduced to drugs, which makes them vulnerable to manipulation and control.

Police are often reluctant to pursue cases of missing women, especially if they had legal travel documents. Sometimes police will investigate if relatives press them for assistance. The relatives who are poor, and debilitated by drugs and alcohol do not usually look for their daughters or sisters.

Police officers said that Turkey, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Yugoslavia are frequent destinations for Ukrainian women. In known cases, the women traveled legally to Mexico and Argentina, then crossed illegally into the United States. Traffickers prefer to take women from Ukraine to Turkey and Germany because that is where there is the greatest demand.

Ukraine is a transit country for migrant smuggling. Most of the migrants are from Asian countries. Some migrants travel to Ukraine legally, and then are smuggled into Western Europe from there. Others pass illegally through a series of countries on their way to Western Europe, North America, or Australia. Most of these illegal migrants are asylum seekers or those paying to be smuggled into the destination countries. Although women maybe trafficked in this way, the smugglers do not appear to be traffickers as well.

## **Involvement of Organized Crime Groups in Prostitution and Trafficking of Women**

Research by Tatyana Denisova and her colleagues found that 65 percent of cases of trafficking of women from Ukraine was carried out by organized crime groups. They were highly organized, had large-scale operations, and were connected to corrupt officials. Organized crime groups delegated specialized tasks, such as: recruitment of women, preparation of documents, arranging travel, and delivery of the woman.

Criminal groups that traffic women also traffic drugs and are involved in racketeering. The size of organized crime groups varies throughout Ukraine. The largest criminal groups in Ukraine with 20 to 30 members are in Odessa; in other regions, the groups are smaller, with five to six members. The criminal groups have territories they operate in, and are known to collaborate with officials. Organized crime groups have databases of potential victims from sources such as applications from women for beauty contests or marriage agencies. The databases include photographs of the women, height, weight, and personality traits.

Traffickers in Ukraine receive from US\$800 to \$2,000 per woman they deliver. The value of the woman depends on her appearance and the destination country: The higher the economic development of the destination country, the higher the price that will be paid for her.

Eighty percent of the traffickers are Ukrainian citizens, and about 60 percent are women. The traffickers use women who were formerly in prostitution as recruiters. Police report that women are increasingly involved with organized crime groups. According to an official of Kyiv Militia, the number of women working with crime groups doubled from 1998 to 1999. Out of 86 crime groups under surveillance, 19 of them had at least one woman member, and the number of criminal proceeding against women for involvement with organized crime was increasing.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *The Voice of Ukraine*, No. 3 (Correspondence with Stanislav Malkin, May 2001).

<sup>125</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy-Kyiv, *Crime Digest*, March 1999, p. 4.

Russian traffickers recruit women from Ukraine for use in prostitution in large cities in Russia. Russia is also a transit country. Women are taken to Moscow, given passports and visas for travel, and then moved on to other destination countries. Researchers found sources that described the operation of criminal groups in Moscow. The criminal group put out orders for women to the recruiters who operate in other regions or countries. Once the women arrived in Moscow, the criminal group controlled them. They were placed in flats and drivers took them where they needed to go. They women were given the clothes they wore and had to repay the pimps for all expenses. The women were required to wait in quiet streets while the pimps recruited men. The men were then allowed to choose a woman they wanted. The pimp negotiated the fee for the woman, which was usually US\$50-\$100 for 1 to 2 hours. The pimps kept track of the women the entire time to protect their investment. Eighty percent of the money earned went to the criminal group and the woman received 15 to 20 percent. Once or twice per week the women had to provide prostitution services to the criminal group members and their friends, and were not compensated for that.

The women were beaten and had to tolerate rude, abusive behavior from the men. Often the women wanted to leave because they could not tolerate the prostitution and abuse. After three to five months when their debts were repaid they were be allowed to leave, but before they left, the criminals usually took the money they are earned, about US\$2000 for two months. Usually, the women were happy to be allowed to go home. Some women were recruited again to go abroad thinking that the next time they might have better luck.

Some of the women from Ukraine who went to Moscow were killed or disappeared. There were two known cases in which the women disappeared. As a result women were trying to go to destinations other than Moscow. The women were afraid of criminals from the Caucasus (referred to as "blacks"). These gangs and men had a reputation for misogynistic attitudes towards the women. They were more abusive and violent, so much so, that the women had to be treated for injuries afterward. The pimps had arrangements with doctors for treatment of women who were injured in prostitution or by the pimps.

Inside Ukraine, criminals use prostitutes themselves, but prostitution is not a major activity of organized crime. The economy is so poor, and unemployment is so high, that men cannot pay much money to buy prostitutes. The average price for a prostitute inside Ukraine is US\$3.00, so the amount of money that can be earned through prostitution is relatively small. (In major trade centers, where there are foreign visitors, the price is higher.) There are known to be prostitution rings in cities such as Kyiv, Donetsk and Lugansk, but not in smaller cities or towns.

Inside Ukraine, prostitution cannot be the main business of criminal groups; other criminal activities are more profitable. Women in prostitution that are connected to criminal groups act as drug pushers and couriers (inside Ukraine, but not internationally), and they buy the drugs themselves.

### **Interview with a Ukrainian Trafficker and Pimp<sup>126</sup>**

A woman known to formerly be a trafficker and pimp was interviewed in Ukraine. She had agreed to meet with us to talk about trafficking Ukrainian women to Moscow, and her role in pimping them in central Moscow. Other sources said that she was sent to Moscow to be a pimp by an organized crime group, and she worked for them.

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<sup>126</sup> The translator was Svetlana Chujan.

The former pimp was approximately 40 years old, slim, and attractive. She described her life and how she got involved in trafficking and pimping. She said she originally went to Moscow as a prostitute; later, she moved up to being a pimp.

*I married when I was 18 to a man who was 6 years older. He did not want a wife, but a mother. I had a lot of psychological problems. We had no sex, but he openly had sex with other women. I suffered psychological violation from my husband. After 15 years of marriage to him, we divorced. I had no furniture, apartment, or clothes. I decided to have them.*

*One time, I listened on the phone when someone called my former husband from Moscow and asked if he could recruit prostitutes for Moscow. He said he wasn't interested, but I remembered this. I had a friend who was desperate for money. She was ready to do anything. About that time my husband told me I was unattractive. So my friend and I decided to go to Moscow to be prostitutes.*

*Someone told the police we were there and connected to organized crime and we were arrested. We spent three days in jail. Then the chief pimp of Moscow came to see me and suggested that I be one of her pimps in Moscow.*

*From 1995 to 1998, I was a pimp in Moscow. I started by getting eight women from one of the pimps who left. The women were being raped and needed someone to organize them. Later, I had up to 20, even 25, women working for me. Some of the women only stayed 2-3 months; some were with me the entire time I was there.*

*I recruited women from Zaporizhia and other parts of Ukraine. I paid \$100 for each girl who was sent. One woman recruited for me from Zaporizhia. Over the three-year period about 15 women came from Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, L'vov, and other cities in Ukraine. Women were also sent from Belarus and Moldova. Russian women were sent from Staropol, Irkutsk and other Russian cities and regions.*

*As the pimp, I was on the street with the women meeting the men in the cars. I worked in the center of Moscow in three hotels: Metropol, Moskva and Naccionale, near the Hollywood Planet. I saw a lot of Hollywood actors there – [She named a few well known actors and entertainers.]*

As a pimp, she viewed herself as a “businesswoman.” She seemed quite proud of the size of her operation and the amount of money she received and spent. She described how prostitution was organized and controlled in central Moscow.

*I charged \$200-\$500 for each woman. I paid for three apartments in Moscow, \$400 each per month for a one room apartment. Three women lived in each. I paid \$50 a night for two drivers. In the center of Moscow, I had one apartment for \$1500 per month. The women waited there for calls, then a driver would pick them up.*

*I paid \$6000 a month to the chief pimp in central Moscow. She paid money to the police. The chief pimp in central Moscow controlled 40 pimps. Each pimp had 7-20 women. They worked near the big hotels. The police gave the chief pimp protection.*

*If you didn't cooperate with the pimps, you would have no clients. They would interfere with your moneymaking. You would be removed from central Moscow.*

Once the trafficked women were delivered to her in Moscow, she described how she prepared them for prostitution. She took their passports and other documents to control them.

*When the girls first arrived, I kept them in a flat for one month. I had them watch pornography to learn what to do. I spent US\$2000-\$3000 on clothes for them. I took their passports until they repaid me the money. I taught the women how to treat men. How to act. How to talk.*

She described controlling the women by rules for what was they were not permitted to do and what they could refuse to do. She had a system of fines to economically punish the women who broke the rules.

*The women could refuse anal sex, but had to do everything else. I always had a couple of women who would do anal for those who asked.*

*I was strict with the girls. They received fines of approximately \$50 for things such as being drunk, taking narcotics, taking men to the apartment, not keeping the apartment clean. I expelled some women. They only made problems. They brought men to the apartment, began taking drugs, and spent all their money on heroin. Some were not in good form. They didn't buy new clothes, had poor body shape, and were not interested in their job.*

One of the ways pimps control women in prostitution is by threatening them with exposure to family and friends. The former pimp gave me Polaroid pictures that had been taken of a girl that appears to be in her teens. She claimed the photographs were taken and used by the woman's peers, but I suspect they were the former pimp's since they were in her possession.

*Most of the women's families don't know they are in prostitution. The women were often mean to each other. Sometimes the women would blackmail a woman they didn't like with photographs. They punished each other for bad behavior.*

The photographs show women humiliating a girl in which the victim could be recognized, but not the perpetrators. In one photograph, they have forced the woman to sit naked on the floor with a used sanitary napkin wrapped around her head. In the next photo someone is pressing the girl's face into the buttocks of another woman. In another, the girl is on her back on the floor with a naked woman pressing her crouch into the woman's face. In another, the victim's face is being forced into a stream of urine from another woman.

The former pimp was reluctant to talk about violence against the women. She tried to minimize it, shift the blame to the women, or describe how she prevented it. She had to be asked several times for specific information about violence. She later told another member of the research team that she had been raped while being a prostitute, so the women should not expect any better than what was done to her. She also said that she was raped while she was a pimp by other pimps and/or members of organized crime groups.

*It was high risk for women to go with clients. There were cases in which a woman would go with one man and when they arrived at the hotel or apartment, there would be 7-8 men in the room. I had a special telephone that could determine who was calling. I instructed the girls that in situations like that to call me and I would call the police.*

*Some of the women provoke the men by getting drunk and not behaving well, so the men will beat them. Some women were bought for group sex. A lot of men buy prostitutes and drugs.*

*Once three criminals came and tried to make me give them three girls for free. I knew if drunken criminals took the girls there would be violence for sure. I refused. They beat me. I spent one month in the hospital. I still have scars on my forehead and my leg is hurt.*

When asked what happened to women if they were beaten, she said they were taken to the hospital, but only if they needed treatment.

She was asked if the women used drugs or alcohol to cope with the prostitution.

*Some of the women drank alcohol to relax; some used drugs, especially with the clients. I tried to persuade them not to because of addiction. In my three years of work, only one woman became an addict. One woman promised not to take drugs, but she did. I expelled her.*

The former pimp was uncomfortable talking about the harm of trafficking, prostitution, or what happened to the women. She preferred to talk about her role as efficient businesswoman. According to other sources, she was forced to leave Moscow by other pimps and organized crime groups. She said she left because she had made enough money.

*After three years work in Moscow, I had enough money to buy a three-room apartment. I bought everything I need. I came home. I went to a hairdressing school in Moscow. I work as a hairdresser now.*

The description of the former pimp gives of her operation in Moscow reinforces what is generally known about the tactics of traffickers and pimps, including the confiscation of travel documents and the use of coercion to control women. Although reluctantly, the former pimp admitted the violence the women were subjected to while in prostitution.

## **Methods of Recruitment and Trafficking**

There are no statistics on recruitment and trafficking of women and children from Ukraine as a whole or any region within Ukraine.

To gain insight into how traffickers recruit women and girls, and which women are targeted for recruitment, we interviewed police officers and women in prostitution.<sup>127</sup> Tatyana Denisova and her assistants also interviewed members of victim's families. Interviewing victims is risky to both the victims and the interviewers. The victims are usually afraid to talk about their experiences, and a pimp threatened one interviewer on the project for asking questions. Also, victims do not want their family and friends to know there were prostitutes. Even after they return from abroad, they say they worked as shop clerks or waitresses while abroad.

The recruitment and trafficking of women is an activity of transnational organized crime groups. The same groups also traffic drugs, stolen cars, and guns, conduct robberies, and are frequently involved in murders or contract killings. Their main activity is usually racketeering. They are involved in trafficking in women because it is a high profit business with low investment. The Ukrainian women are paid almost nothing.

Researchers interviewed 68 people who were victims of crimes related to trafficking in women in six regional cities: Donetsk (4), Zaporozhe (16), Lvov (19), Kharkov (6) Kherson (6), and Chernigov (17). They interviewed 18 relatives of victims of trafficking in five regional cities: Zaporizhia (8), Lvov (4), Kharkov (2), Kherson (1), and Chernigov (3).

Of the known victims, only 12 percent tried to report their victimization. Victims of trafficking are very reluctant to speak about their experiences. Even when they have been coerced

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<sup>127</sup> Interviews were conducted by Donna M. Hughes and Tatyana Denisova in Zaporizhia in November 2000. Svetlana Chujan served as translator.

and beaten, they do not reveal this to the police. The risk of retaliation from the criminals is too high. They believe it is difficult to prove that a crime has been committed as stipulated by Article 124-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Also, because of the involvement of organized crime in the trafficking of women, victims are afraid to make reports to the police. Their fears are attributed to the corruption of officials who may have knowledge or involvement in illegal activities connected to trafficking. They know there is inadequate protection for victims who make reports to the police.

The interviews revealed that most victims of trafficking are between 17 and 26 years of age. Approximately 80 percent of the women were unemployed when they left Ukraine, and 60 percent of them remained unemployed upon their return. These interviewees said the frequent destination countries for trafficked women were: Turkey, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Israel, Syria, and China.

Approximately 70 percent of women were trafficked by means of sophisticated deceptions. The traffickers presented credible, step-by-step plans so that victims had little suspicion that their destination is the sex industry. Mostly, the women are offered work abroad as a waitress or dancer. Traffickers approach beauty contest participants with offers, and winners of contests are offered contracts with top foreign modeling agencies. These deceptions are successful despite 49 percent of surveyed women being aware of the risk of being trafficked into the sex industry.

The recruiter or trafficker assists the woman in getting the necessary travel documents. He pays for the travel documents, tickets, and expenses with the arrangement that she will repay the expenses when she is employed abroad. When the woman arrives at the destination, she is told that she has been sold, and will have to be a prostitute to repay the expenses, plus interest. If she resists, she is threatened and/or beaten. If the woman manages to free herself from the pimps in the destination country, she is often afraid to return home if she knows her documents are false, if her tourist visa has expired, or if she traveled illegally to leave the country. Given the lack of experience most young women in Ukraine have with foreign travel, documents, and employment contracts, they are often confused and easily misled by pimps.

Researchers have found that the traffickers are usually not former criminals and have never been in prison. If they were known criminals, it would be more difficult for them to leave the country. The pimps often use former victims of trafficking to recruit new victims. In the earlier years, victims were recruited from the cities, but more recently, the recruiters are moving into the countryside to small towns and villages to recruit women for work abroad.

The traffickers usually have good organizational skills; some worked as social organizers in the former Soviet Union. As a result, they are often well known and respected people. They often own licensed businesses, such as traveling agencies. They have links to officials and contacts abroad. They usually have traveled abroad for commercial purposes in the past. They know the market for women in Ukraine and abroad. They are sometimes affiliated with "marriage" or "introduction" agencies. They are familiar with the laws of each country, and know how to protect themselves from the police, either by working around laws or with corrupt officials.

Traffickers are also adept at deceiving victims, so that even afterwards the victim doesn't fully understand who was involved in selling her into prostitution. For example, the researchers found cases in which the traffickers recruited women for work abroad in typical jobs such as waitress or dancer. The trafficker delivers the woman to the work site and the woman works for a week or two doing the job she expected. The trafficker returns and asks her if she is satisfied with the job. If so, she is asked to sign a document indicating that she is satisfied with the service the

“agency” provided in finding her a job abroad. After the trafficker has departed with the signed document, the situation rapidly changes. The woman is beaten and forced into prostitution. Sometimes they are moved to other countries. The first job was just a stop in a transit country (maybe even a stop while necessary documents are being prepared), and another layer of deception is added to protect the recruiter/trafficker from Ukraine. Often the victim only blames the people in the transit country for forcing her into prostitution and continues to insist the person/agency who assisted her from Ukraine was not involved.

Traffickers also recruit teen girls and children. The trade in children is carried out in several ways. Some children are abducted and sold through illegal adoptions. There have been several cases in which parents sold their children to traffickers who resold them abroad. Traffickers also present themselves to parents as representatives of foreign modeling schools for girls aged 13 to 16. Girls are invited to auditions to be selected by modeling agencies. Parents are deceived and do not know that their daughter will be sold to a brothel.

The “modeling schools” in Ukraine offer to train girls in modeling and social skills. Girls, some as young as 10, are recruited for training classes. In one case, a 12-year-old girl studied at such a “modeling school” for 5 months. She was taught how to walk and pose. Photographs were taken in poses that suggested that the girls were being groomed for pornography and/or prostitution. One girl was photographed in only her panties and bra, and was told that the photographs were being sent to the United Arab Emirates. When a suspicious parent complained to the police about the activities of the “school,” the agency changed its name, but continued to operate.

Traffickers are known to operate as religious groups to recruit girls in Ukraine. In Kherson, there was a case of two “missionaries” from the U.S. who came to teach children English and the about the Bible. The children and parents were told that if the children learned English they could go to the U.S. to continue their studies. Parents eventually discovered that the children had been shown pornography, sexually abused, and prepared for sexual exploitation. The teens and young adults ranged in age from 14 to 20. The girls were told that the group believed it was acceptable for adults to have sex with children. They were instructed not to write to relatives and to end all relationships with friends and relatives. The group planned to take the children to Italy. Their plan was discovered, but they escaped before they were arrested. Even as the traffickers were departing they told some of the children they would send visas for them to join them abroad.

Homeless children are extremely vulnerable to recruitment by traffickers. In 2000, there were an estimated 100,000 homeless children in Ukraine. Many of them became homeless after their alcoholic parents sold their apartments for money. Little is known about this population in Ukraine, although information from Russia indicates homeless children and orphans are frequently recruited and exploited by pornographers and traffickers.<sup>128</sup> According to MiraMed Institute in Moscow, approximately 30 to 50 percent of orphans are recruited into crime, prostitution and trafficking within one year of leaving the orphanage at age 17.<sup>129</sup>

Police officers thought that women were easily recruited to go abroad because of high unemployment in Ukraine, not because they woman wanted to be prostitutes. In agricultural areas, there are no wages at all. Because of these economic circumstances if someone promises a woman US\$100/month, she will probably accept the “opportunity.” Police officers said they were aware of

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<sup>128</sup> Donna M. Hughes, “Trafficking in Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation: The Case of the Russian Federation,” International Organization for Migration, unpublished report.

<sup>129</sup> Sharon Ryan, “Training for life,” *AmCham News*, July-August 2000, p. 32

married women with 2-3 children who had to earn money, so turned to prostitution. According to police, seventy percent of trafficked women travel on authentic (not counterfeit) documents. The traffickers obtain tourist visas for 2 to 3 month periods for the victims. Other police officers said it was not difficult to recruit women in prostitution because "they can be found anywhere."

Women are most frequently trafficked through travel agencies. The agencies were legally registered. There are some travel agencies that are not legally registered and do not have a license. When questioned by police they claim that they only provide consultation services and therefore do not need a license. The women appear to go abroad voluntarily and legally on tourist visas, but they do not return. One police officer said that the traffickers move one woman at a time, sometimes two, but never more than three at a time. The traffickers are able to buy visas, so the women travel with official documents. In these cases, the women travel by themselves. They are seldom accompanied by a member of the crime group. The women are given a phone number or address for a contact in the destination or transit country.

Other sources interviewed by Tatyana Denisova and her colleagues reported that traffickers collect women in small groups to be taken abroad. The movement of the women in groups is based in economy of scale, that all bribes, documents, and travel arrangements are less expensive for a number of women rather than one at a time. Another said that there were tourist groups of women organized to go to Turkey in which one half of the group did not return.

Trafficking in women is a criminal activity that is highly flexible. Criminals quickly adapt to different opportunities and risks, so traffickers may operate one way in one region, but differently in another region. The same group may change their tactics from year to year. Strategies and techniques change according to profit, ease of recruiting victims, cooperation of corrupt officials, and risk of being detected.

Women often have to pay all or part of the travel costs. They borrow money from relatives and friends to pay their expenses. There are known cases of mothers sending their daughters to Turkey to earn money. Frequently, women return from Turkey to recruit their friends. Women who have already traveled or been trafficked to other countries often serve as recruiters. For instance, one Ukrainian woman called from Turkey to invite women to join her.

If women are knowingly going to be in prostitution, they prefer Western European countries as destinations. They believe they will be treated better in Western Europe. They say they are more likely to be mutilated in Turkey, or enslaved in Greece.

The Ukrainian researchers were able to discover the mechanisms used to traffic women to Turkey. In one case, after the woman arrived in Turkey, she was employed as a shop clerk in a clothing store. For the first week or two, the supervisor helped her learn the new job. Then she was given a quota on the number of items she had to sell each day. If she did not sell enough, a debit was assigned to her. When the amount of the debit rose to a large amount, she was forced into prostitution to pay the "debt." In other cases, women accepted job as a domestic servant, waitress, or clerk. Upon their arrival, they started work at the anticipated job. Shortly thereafter, they were asked to sign a document, which stated that they are pleased with the job and have no complaints about the agency that assisted her finding the job. After that the women are forced into prostitution.

To learn more about the recruitment of women, we interviewed two "classes" of women in prostitution. The first group, considered the "lowest" class, was composed of narcotics addicted women, who worked along a major highway. The second group, considered the "medium" class, was composed of women who worked in the center city and clubs. We also visited a European style nightclub that featured strip shows.

To determine if traffickers targeted women already in prostitution for recruitment into prostitution abroad, we asked the women if they had been invited to go abroad, and whether they would go, if asked. Of the six narcotics addicted women, none of them said they had been invited to go abroad. All of the women said that they would not go abroad, because they were too afraid. One woman said, "It is better to stay here, where I know things." One woman said she knew a woman who went to Turkey. Her friend told her that the men are violent there, so she said it was better to be in prostitution in Zaporizhâ.

The narcotics addicted women do not appear to be targeted for recruitment by transnational traffickers. Given their poor health, deteriorating appearance, and drug dependency, traffickers probably view them as poor investments to take abroad. Although, traffickers and pimps frequently pressure women to use drugs, and manipulate women's drug use, at some point, the woman's physical dependency on drugs takes such a toll that she loses her value for pimps. Police confirmed this by saying that no one wants to take the drug-addicted women abroad.

The woman in prostitution in a nightclub said she knew four women who went abroad. One went to Cyprus. She has now returned and reportedly "made a lot of money." Two went to Turkey. They told her they are living with Turkish men and are all right. One went to Egypt and has disappeared. A relative went to find her, but was unable to do so. She said that someone tried to recruit her to go to Italy, but she was too afraid because of the mass media stories about sexual slavery, and what she has heard from her friends.

The woman from the city center said that she had heard of women being taken to Serbia, Turkey, Germany, and Latin America. She said she knew one woman who went to Turkey for three years. After earning US\$7,000, the woman and her friends were deported because the owner didn't want to pay them the money. They came back to Ukraine with nothing. She had also heard of women going to Moscow, and then to Norway and Finland. A pimp arranges a bus that takes the women across the border. She said that each spring and autumn recruiters come and ask her and her friends if they want to go abroad. The recruiters say the women will be provided with an apartment and a bodyguard, and can earn US\$10,000 per month. So far, she has always declined the offer because she is afraid of what might happen.

From these women's experience, it appears as if women in prostitution know about the trafficking in women. Only the healthier, more attractive women without drug addictions are targeted for recruitment.

The police did not think that international pimping, meaning pimps moving women from Ukraine to other countries, occurred very often. More commonly, traffickers operated by recruiting women for employment, and then deceived them and forced them into prostitution once they were abroad.

There is communication from women who are trafficked about the conditions of prostitution in the different destination countries. Once one destination site gets a poor reputation, the women are told that other destinations are better. For example, after women heard that conditions in Moscow were bad, women were more willing to be recruited to go to the United Arab Emirates. In Middle Eastern countries, Russian and Ukrainian women were reportedly paid more, and for a while the rumor was that Arab men treated the women better than the Chechens. Both women and police said that the conditions for women in prostitution were the worst in Turkey and Yugoslavia, and if the women had a choice, they preferred Western European destinations.

Researchers found that some women are willing to go abroad for prostitution even though they have heard that conditions are bad. Each woman thinks that it will be different for her, that she will be able to control the situation, or that the conditions will be different in another country.

## **Recruitment of Women by Marriage Agencies**

The bride trade is based on recruiting women from regions of poverty and high unemployment, and marketing them to Western men based on sexual, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. The men seeking companions or wives through this route often express their desire for women who are interested in fulfilling traditional family roles. A review of the marriage or introduction agencies that operate on the Internet reveals that often sexualized photographs of the women are used to appeal to men. The descriptions of the women claim they are oriented towards pleasing men.

Some activists and NGOs suspect that women who find Western partners through marriage agencies are at higher risk of becoming victims of violence and exploitation, but there is not enough data or research to substantiate that. This remains a valid unanswered question.

Research on Internet based marriage or introduction agencies was undertaken to investigate the role of marriage agencies in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. Since this type of research had not been done before, it was not clear at the beginning what we would be able to find or the significance of the findings. General questions that we hoped to address were:

1. How many Internet-based marriage or introduction agencies are operating in the countries of the former Soviet Union, particularly Ukraine?
2. How many women have been recruited by the agencies?
3. Are there particular regions and cities from which women are being recruited?
4. Are marriage or introduction agencies involved in trafficking women for sexual exploitation?

During summer 2001, searches on the Web found almost 500 marriage agency sites that advertised women from former Soviet countries. Two hundred and nineteen (219) Web sites with women from countries of the former Soviet Union were indexed.

The 219 agencies were selected as representative of those found on the Web. The number includes large agencies with 1000s of women listed and very small agencies with just a few dozen women listed. We made an effort to include agencies from diverse locations, especially those outside large cities. Some agencies, the largest ones, included women from almost all of the former Soviet countries. Other agencies were regional and included only women from one city or oblast.

From each of the Web sites, the number of women from each city, oblast and country was entered in the database. Almost 120,000 women were counted from these sites. Efforts were made to avoid over counting. There were several Web sites that compiled women from other sites or agencies. These duplications were not counted.

There was a large range of numbers of women from each country. (See Table 3) The fifteen countries of the former Soviet Union can be divided into three categories for the recruitment of women by marriage or introduction agencies: High, Medium, and Low. Although there are large differences in the size and populations of these 15 countries, there are still large differences in the recruitment of women by marriage agencies in these countries. Ukraine was one of three countries in the High category with almost 32,000 women. The largest numbers of women were the Russian Federation with over 62,000 women; Belarus had almost 13,000. There were a few Medium range

countries with a few thousand women: Kazakhstan (3,037), Kyrgyzstan (4,190), Latvia (1,760), and Uzbekistan (1,139). The rest in the Low category had less than 1000 women, Azerbaijan (204), Estonia (551), Lithuania (626), Moldova (884), and a few countries had less than a couple of dozen women, Armenia (23), Georgia (7), Tajikistan (8), and Turkmenistan (25).

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**Table 3****Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies  
from Countries of the Former Soviet Union**

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Armenia	23
Azerbaijan	204
Belarus	12,683
Estonia	551
Georgia	7
Kazakhstan	3037
Kyrgyzstan	4190
Latvia	1760
Lithuania	626
Moldova	884
Russian Federation	62,605
Tajikistan	8
Turkmenistan	25
Ukraine	31,837
Uzbekistan	1,139
Unknown	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,649</b>

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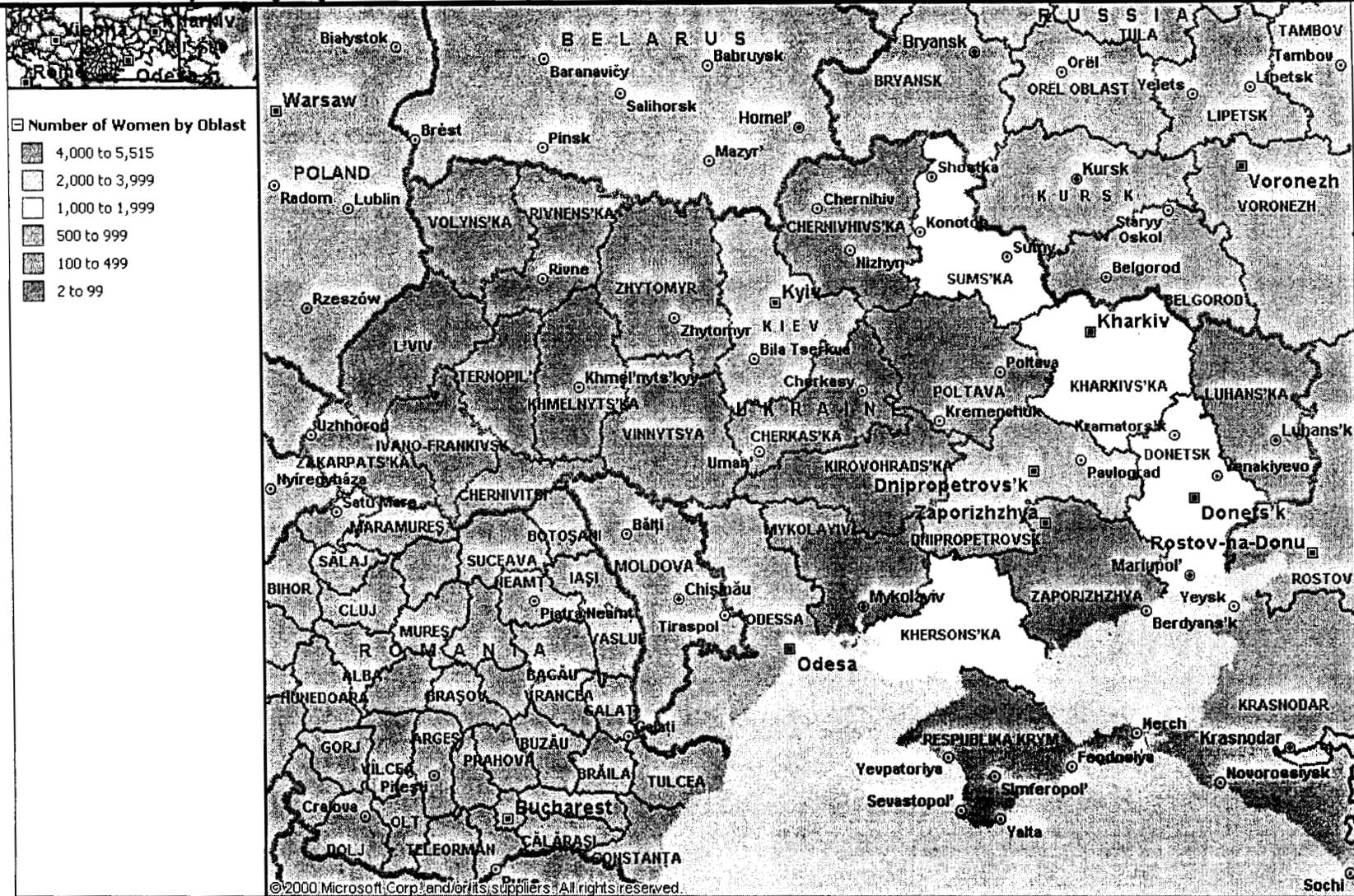
There were sizeable differences in the number of women recruited in different oblasts in Ukraine. (See Table 4 and Map 1.) In Ukraine, there are a few distinct patterns for the recruitment of women by marriage agencies. Generally, the oblasts with the lowest number of recruited women are in the western Ukraine. Oblasts with large cities, such as the capital Kiev, Odessa, and Dnipropetrovsk, have large numbers of women in the marriage agencies. The Crimea has the largest number of women recruited (5,515), and the other oblasts on or near the Black Sea have fairly high numbers of women recruited from them.

According to findings from research conducted by the Ukrainian researchers, two-thirds of young Ukrainian women want to go abroad. Many of them are influenced not only by the poverty and lack of opportunity at home, but by Western lifestyles seen in the media. Many believe they will find a wealthy, attractive Western businessman who will marry them and solve their problems.

Nongovernmental organizations report hearing of cases of women being trafficked for the sex industry after being recruited by a marriage or introduction agency, but no specific cases with details are known. There are a number of aspects of these types of agencies that indicate that they are likely to be involved in trafficking of women. 1) They have recruited a number of women who have indicated a desire to travel abroad or emigrate; 2) The women are single and able to move, although some of them have children; 3) The women may have corresponded with men, met Western men on tours at "socials" sponsored by the agencies, and be willing to go abroad if they agency makes them an offer.

Map 1

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Ukraine, by Oblast



Also, some of the agencies on the Web site are operating other businesses that facilitate the travel and trafficking of women. Less is known about the operation of marriage/introduction agencies in Ukraine, but in Russia more information is available from non-governmental organizations. In Chelyabinsk, Russia, an NGO representative said that the traffickers operate in travel agencies.<sup>130</sup> In St. Petersburg, an NGO representative said that marriage agencies are well organized business and “well protected” legally and by the political-business-criminal networks. As in Chelyabinsk, the same people who own marriage agencies also own foreign travel and employment agencies, some of whom are known to be traffickers.

**Table 4**

**Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Ukraine, by Oblast**

Cherkas'ka	149	Mykolayiv	533
Chernivhivs'ka	35	Odessa	3225
Chernivitsi	268	Poltava	368
Dnipropetrovsk	2742	Respublika Krym	5515
Donetsk	1055	Rivnens'ka	2
Ivano-Frankivsk	10	Sums'ka	1994
Kharkivs'ka	1188	Ternopil'	12
Khersons'ka	1053	Vinnytsya	440
Khmelnys'ka	28	Volyns'ka	24
Kiev	3401	Zakarpats'ka	46
Kirovohrads'ka	10	Zaporizhzhya	539
Luhans'ka	281	Zhytomyr	125
L'viv	41	Unknown	8753
		<b>Total</b>	<b>31837</b>

Several of the marriage agencies Web sites from Ukraine have underage girls listed as potential correspondents or wives. The Romeo and Juliet Ukrainian Marriage Agency located in Kherson, Ukraine had girls listed as being 15 and 16 years of age.<sup>131</sup> The Premier Matrimonial Agency in Odessa, Ukraine had contact information for several underage girls (aged 10, 12, 14 and 15) and a boy (aged 15). The 14-year-old girl is described as a “young and slim girl.”<sup>132</sup>

The U.S. Embassy has raised warnings about the exploitative nature of marriage agencies, but the focus was on protecting American men. The Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has issued two security alerts warning men of possible scams run by marriage agencies to get money from American (or Western European) men.

<sup>130</sup> Interview, Larisa Vasileyeva, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Women, Chelyabinsk, Russia, 15 August 2001.

<sup>131</sup> Romeo and Juliet Ukrainian Marriage Agency, <http://romeojuliet.com>, Accessed 6 July 2001.

<sup>132</sup> Premier Matrimonial Agency, <http://premier-agency.hypermart.net/Odessa.htm>, Accessed 6 July 2001.

*The RSO [Regional Security Office] would...like to call to your attention the 'love trap' on the internet originating from Ukraine. 'Innocent-looking' women from Ukraine are seeking mates in the West. The would be subscribers hope to 'meet your dream women' on the internet and instead are duped into paying exorbitant internet fees to prolong contact with available women in Ukraine.*<sup>133</sup>

A later security alert warned men about the potential Internet fraud from escort services, marriage agencies, and "enterprising young women" who extract money from American men.<sup>134</sup>

This research project was able to show that there are a considerable number of "marriage agencies" recruiting women in Ukraine. There is a large difference in the number of women recruited by oblast and region. It is reasonable to suspect that such agencies are involved in recruiting women for purposes of trafficking, but the links have not been established. The U.S. Embassy has warned of these agencies involvement in exploitation of men and/or fraud. It is likely in the economic climate in Ukraine that individuals or organizations are making money any way they can through such agencies and Web sites. Their involvement in trafficking of women should be investigated further.

### ***Awareness of and Attitudes about Trafficking and Prostitution***

A number of Ukrainian newspapers have reported on the phenomenon of the "slave trade" in women. Tatyana Denisova and her colleagues did a content analysis of media stories. The majority of articles (70%) represent Ukrainian women being involved in prostitution in other countries as sexual slavery resulting from the deception of the women by traffickers. Sixteen percent of the articles do not characterize the women as being enslaved, but as women seeking work and finding a job in prostitution. Five percent presented positive stories and images of women in prostitution abroad. Nine percent of the media articles were ambivalent about what happened to the women or if any harm had been done.

Tatyana Denisova and her colleagues conducted a survey on awareness of trafficking and attitudes towards trafficked women. Three hundred and fifty-nine people were surveyed in six regional cities: Zaporizhia (100), Lvov (100), Kharkov (60), Chernigov (59), Kherson (20), and Donetsk (20). Respondents were a cross section of the population, including employees at private firms and state offices, teachers, accountants, pensioners, students, health care workers, laborers, prisoners and unemployed. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that they were aware of the problem of trafficking in women from Ukraine. Twelve percent said that there was no trafficking in women because the women chose to go abroad. Three percent of the respondents said they did not know until then that the women were enslaved. Seventy-five percent said they had learned about the problem from the mass media.

Concerning the public's attitude toward victims, 78 percent said that the woman was the victim of a crime who required assistance. The remaining 22 percent said that the woman is guilty, and had no sympathy for what happens to her.

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<sup>133</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kiev, Ukraine, "Security Alert: Computer Scams—A Growing Problem in Ukraine," 20 November 2000.

<sup>134</sup> Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy, Kiev, Ukraine, "'Love Trap'-Internet Fraud for the Lovelorn," 13 April 2001.

The women in the survey population were asked what they thought the risk was of being trafficked into sexual slavery if they went abroad. Forty-nine percent said that they thought there was a risk of becoming involved in the sex industry if they went abroad for work. Seventeen percent were sure that they could find work unrelated to the sex industry. Twelve percent hoped that they would be able to find work based on their job qualifications and personal skills. Nineteen percent said that before they went abroad for work they would check the credentials and reputation of the employer. Only three percent said they would voluntarily accept a job in the sex industry.

Forty-one interviewees were asked about their attitudes towards prostitution and women in prostitution. Almost half (49%) of the respondents said the cause of prostitution was the economic problems in society. About one-third (37%) said the primary cause of trafficking was men's demand for women in prostitution. Approximately 20 percent said that cause of prostitution was women's depravity. There is a stigma against women who are in, or have been in, prostitution. Only a quarter (25%) said they would maintain contact with a daughter if they knew she was in prostitution.

One hundred and sixty young women graduates from Yalta, Sudak, Alushta, Berdyansk, Primorsk, and Zaporizhya were interviewed about their attitudes towards going abroad and their risk of being trafficked. Forty-eight percent of them had completed secondary education, 33 percent had partial secondary educations, and 19 percent had some higher education. Seventy-two percent of the women were unmarried or divorced, 17 percent had boyfriends or were going through a divorce, and 11 percent were married. Some of their husbands supported them going abroad. Two-thirds of those surveyed indicated that they wanted to go abroad. Forty percent said they knew there was a risk of being forced into prostitution, but they were sure that it would not happen to them. The majority of them did not know a foreign language or have professional qualifications. In Yalta, a resort city, 97 percent of the women said they wanted to go abroad, and six percent said they were so eager to go abroad that they would agree to be in prostitution, even to being "sex slaves" in order to have a rich life.

Overwhelmingly, young women of Ukraine perceive the solution to their problems is to be found abroad. The belief that they can succeed if they try hard or are lucky is very strong. Even women who are previous victims of trafficking say they are willing to try again. Sixty-three percent of the 84 victims interviewed said that although they suffered while abroad, they would try again and hoped to have better luck next time.

There are mass media articles promoting prostitution abroad that report that women make a lot of money and can practically have a holiday at a foreign man's expense. Some women believe the stories, or at least are willing to take the risk. As a result of this apparent consent to be prostitutes, officials dismiss or minimize the problem of trafficking saying "they know what they are getting into."

One of the researchers interviewed the writers of these positive stories about prostitution abroad. The writers said that it was difficult to publish the negative aspects of prostitution. They said that their focus was on poverty and people with no food, money, or hot water. They were less interested in the well being of women in prostitution because it appeared as if they were much better off than many other women.

### ***Destination Countries for Women Trafficked from Ukraine***

In 2000, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted 81 trafficked women to return to Ukraine – 27 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 from Kosovo, 18 from Germany, 11 from Bulgaria, and 8 from Italy. In 1999 and 2000, La Strada assisted 44 women in returning to

Ukraine.<sup>135</sup> There are no official records on the number of Ukrainian citizens deported from other countries. According to IOM in October 2000, there were 185 women returned to the Kyiv airport by authorities in other countries. Mostly, the women came from Turkey, Israel, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Switzerland.<sup>136</sup>

Although there are many factors contributing to Ukraine being a source country for trafficked women, the receiving countries have complementary factors that enable and facilitate these activities. One of the most common destination countries is Greece. According to the U.S. State Department, Greece has the worst record for trafficking women and lack of effort to combat trafficking of all countries in the European Union. (It has is ranked as a Tier 3 –the lowest rank-in the rating system for compliance to minimum standards to combat trafficking.<sup>137</sup>)

The following description of the situation in Greece confirms information received from sources in Ukraine, and emphasizes the complementary factors, such as organized crime, official corruption, and lack of services for victims, that contribute to the transnational trafficking of women and children.

In Greece in 1999, 57 Ukrainian women were identified as victims of trafficking by police.<sup>138</sup> In 2000, there were 41 official cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation involving 125 victims. Of the 335 foreign women arrested, 56, the second highest number, were from Ukraine. An additional 1,822 foreign women were arrested for illegally working in bars, cafes, and clubs; and 218 foreign women were arrested for illegal prostitution. The same year, 102 procurers were arrested-82 were Greek (70 men and 12 women) and 20 were foreigners (17 men and three women).<sup>139</sup> As of early 2001, 36 Ukrainian victims or their families contacted the Ukrainian NGO La Strada for assistance in returning from Greece.<sup>140</sup>

The transnational character of trafficking is often revealed when a trafficking and prostitution ring is broken up. In one case in Greece, when an arrest was made, women were found from Ukraine, Albania, Denmark, Russia, Lithuania, Nigeria, and Greece.<sup>141</sup> Ukrainians operate as traffickers and pimps in destination countries. In one case in Greece, a Greek man and Ukrainian woman, assisted by a Bulgarian woman and two Albanian men, were arrested for running a trafficking and prostitution ring. Two Bulgarian women were found captive and freed.<sup>142</sup> According to a police report, Ukrainians are among the top six nationalities of pimps operating in Greece.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> International Organization for Migration, "New IOM Figures on the Global Scale of Trafficking," *Trafficking in Migrants Quarterly Bulletin*, No.23, April 2001.

<sup>136</sup> IOM, April 2001.

<sup>137</sup> Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. State Department, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 Trafficking in Persons Report, July 2001, p. 86.

<sup>138</sup> Greek Police report, cited by Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, "Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001.

<sup>139</sup> Dora Anatoniou, "Where the exploitation starts and who benefits," *Kathimerini*, 27 December 2001.

<sup>140</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 13.

<sup>141</sup> "Prostitution arrests," *Kathimerini*, 25 August 2001.

<sup>142</sup> "Police break up international racket," *Kathimerini*, 13 August 2001.

<sup>143</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 28.

A recently published report on trafficking of women into Greece reveals the conditions that trafficked women must endure, the trauma sustained by the victims, and mode of operation of the traffickers and pimps.

*In Greece, living and working conditions vary according to the experience or not of prostitution before arrival, the different types of consent, the extent of any deceit, coercion or violence, the amount of contracted debt and the mode of repayment.*

*Secret brothels in Athens and other Greek cities, rooms in cheap hotels and basements in several buildings, where young foreigners are imprisoned and tortured by unscrupulous procurers (both foreign and Greek) who 'train' with in-group rapes, beating and humiliating young women in order to force them into prostitution.... Foreign women, who usually do not speak Greek, are transferred to clients by collaborating taxi-drivers, waiting for the end of the 'service' and ready to interfere if something happens to the 'commodity'.*

<sup>144</sup>

Trafficked women in Greece are held in conditions of extreme servitude by violence and mechanisms of control.

*This means 12 hours a day, non stop, they receive very little from the brothel owner or procurer, since 70% of more of their earning go to the traffickers, while they pay for their food and lodging, and are often robbed of their income. Sometimes they are not allowed to keep any of their earnings in exchange for their transport and living costs: the pimps just give them food and the minimum for personal hygiene. The traffickers control women by emotional and physical manipulation, alcohol and drug dependency, by isolating them from the local society, compelling them to work and live in the same place. This is easily achieved due to their poor grasp of the local language and their illegal status in the host country. A typical isolation strategy is to trick or coerce a woman into surrendering her passport making her in effect a 'non-person.' They are deprived of their human rights and freedoms, are forbidden to leave the places without permission, threatened by deportation, violence and humiliation if they ask the authorities for help. They may be locked into apartment of secret rooms in bars. The newcomers are under surveillance of a bodyguard and are obliged to give all their earnings to their pimps. Sometimes the methods used to constrain women into prostitution are reminiscent of the concentration camps of the nazi regime, 'small dachaus': There is a preparatory period of three months during which they are raped, beaten, and without adequate food and water. A great number of the women bear the marks of severe beatings.<sup>145</sup>*

The violence and abuse sustained by the women results in emotional and physical trauma. The following example shows the disorientation experienced by victims.

*Prostitution in Greece 'entails new heights of violence as well as degradation and exploitation of the prostitute.' 26-28% of the foreign prostitutes entered into prostitution through direct and prolonged use of physical or psychological violence. No one among them has the possibility of refusing. Only 20-23% knew the purpose for which they came to Greece. ...36% of the foreign prostitutes are characterised by clear loss of the sense of*

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<sup>144</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, "Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001, p. 18.

<sup>145</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, "Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No. 2, August 2001, p. 19.

space – only 27% knew in which neighborhood of Athens they were, and 32% did not know where Athens is! With regard to the sense of time, 33% did not know what day of the week it was, 56% did not know the date (up to 8 days out) and 10% did not know the month. Some of them did not know the year.<sup>146</sup>

Because of lack of services and police intervention, there are reports that there are only four ways for women to escape from a trafficking/prostitution ring: 1) become useless to pimps because of emotional breakdown (as a result of trauma); 2) become unprofitable to pimps because of advanced stage of pregnancy; 3) be helped to escape by a client; and 4) death.<sup>147</sup> Suicides are sometimes reported in local newspapers.<sup>148</sup>

When women do escape from pimps or traffickers, they have found little assistance from the Ukrainian embassies. The Ukrainian consul has said that they do not have the money to send victims home when they ask for assistance.<sup>149</sup> Women are also at risk when they are deported. When women are deported from Greece by bus or train, there have been cases of organized crime gang members intercepting them and returning them to prostitution. A Ukrainian woman deported from Greece was kidnapped, along with six other women, from the first train station in Bulgaria by the “Bulgarian mafia.”<sup>150</sup> The officials involved in deporting women work in collaboration with organized crime groups to recapture women who have escaped or are being deported.<sup>151</sup> According to one source, 80 percent of women who are deported by train are returned to Greece within 48 hours.<sup>152</sup> Women can be forced back into prostitution in the same country or sold to traffickers/pimps in other countries.

Official corruption is a significant factor in facilitating the trafficking of women from the sending country of Ukraine, and it is also significant factor in destination countries. For example, in Greece a number of high-ranking officials have been arrested for involvement in trafficking and prostitution rackets. Government officials and the police officials’ professional organization acknowledge that police collaborate with trafficking networks in Greece.<sup>153</sup> To combat police corruption, an Internal Affairs Bureau was established in 1999. In its first annual report it stated that 146 charges were brought against 74 police officers, approximately one half of whom were involved in granting residence permits to undocumented migrants and prostitution rings.<sup>154</sup>

Examples of police collaboration or corruption in destination include: In Athens, a former chief of police was charged in a case involving 30 brothels which housed women from countries of

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<sup>146</sup> Non-aligned Women’s Movement, Greece, 1999 as cited by Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 19.

<sup>147</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 21.

<sup>148</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 22.

<sup>149</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Trafficking of Migrant Women for Forced Prostitution into Greece,” July 2001, p. 13.

<sup>150</sup> Fotini Kalliri, “The chronicle of shame,” *Kathimerini*, 27 December 2001.

<sup>151</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 15.

<sup>152</sup> G. Marnelou, “The routes of prostitution,” *Eleftherotypia* 23, Nov. 1999, as cited in Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 20.

<sup>153</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 19.

<sup>154</sup> Human Rights Watch, July 2001, p. 20.

the former Soviet Union.<sup>155</sup> In another case, a group known as the “meat machine” in Trikala and Karditsa, Greece, thought to have traded 1,200 foreign women for prostitution over a 10 year period, included police officials and someone from the prosecutor’s office. The police provided protection for the clubs in exchange for sexual use of the women.<sup>156</sup> In Cyprus, another destination for trafficked Ukrainian women, the former immigration chief was found guilty of accepting bribes to issue work permits to foreign women who worked as strippers in clubs, some of whom were forced into prostitution.<sup>157</sup>

The demand for women in prostitution is increasing in Greece, which creates the demand for trafficked women and makes it so profitable. According to one survey from 1991 to 1996, the “prostitutes clientele” increased by 60 percent and the number of “promiscuous sexual contacts” increased by 100 percent.<sup>158</sup>

*The prostitution market is demand driven. The demand comes from brothel, clubs or bars owners who pay the suppliers and put women to work. Above all, it comes from clients. Collapse of values and the view that with money one can buy everything, even the bodies of underage children, characterize the clients. During the 1990s, the clients’ preference for a young submissive, docile and obedient coloured woman changed. Now the choice is for a woman from Central and Eastern Europe: white, beautiful, educated, but poverty-stricken, so that she may comply with all their wishes.<sup>159</sup>*

This description of trafficking in this one country emphasizes the need for destination countries to combat the demand for women created by prostitution, organized crime, and corrupt officials.

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<sup>155</sup> “Charges against former police chief; Retired officer is tied to prostitution racket,” *Kathimerini*, 19 April 2000.

<sup>156</sup> “Probe into huge prostitution racket,” *Kathimerini*, 6 December 2001.

<sup>157</sup> “Immigration chief in stripper racket,” *Kathimerini*, 31 October 2001.

<sup>158</sup> B. Lazarus, 1998 as cited in Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001.

<sup>159</sup> Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, August 2001, p. 31.

# Recommendations for Combating Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Ukraine

These recommendations have been drawn from the research conducted by Tatyana Denisova, her colleagues, and Donna M. Hughes. The findings by other researchers of the US-Ukraine Partnership on organized crime have been used to formulate some of the recommendations.

## 1. Demonstrate Political Will to Combat Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

Most importantly, demonstrate political will to combat trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. Officials at every level of the state must be willing to build a strong, coordinated response to halt the buying, selling, and exploitation of women and children.

## 2. Combat Corruption and Organized Crime

All efforts should be made to break the hold that corruption and organized crime has on the state of Ukraine.

Organized crime and official corruption stand in the way of economic development for Ukraine as a whole, and particularly for women. Women need opportunities for gainful employment inside Ukraine to improve their social and economic status. Presently, too many officials are involved in corrupt activities that divert the wealth of Ukraine into the hands of a few and prevent healthy economic development the nation as a whole.

Organized crime groups stymie domestic economic development by controlling businesses through protection schemes and extortion. Ukraine has not been able to benefit from foreign investment because companies cannot do business in an economic environment ruled by corrupt officials and organized crime groups. Women suffer from loss of employment opportunities. In addition, women are hindered from starting their own businesses in this criminal environment.

Trafficking of women and children from Ukraine is facilitated by the corruption of officials and the unchecked operation of organized crime groups that profit by buying and selling women and children for prostitution both transnationally and inside Ukraine.

## 3. Improve Awareness and Prevention of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

The state must initiate prevention and awareness programs on trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The United States Department of State placed Ukraine in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of its three tier ranking for its compliance to new minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons.<sup>160</sup> One of the criticisms of Ukraine was that it did not support prevention programs for victims of trafficking.

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<sup>160</sup> Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. State Department, *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 Trafficking in Persons Report*, July 2001.

Nongovernmental organizations have undertaken prevention and awareness campaigns. Although 90 percent of the Ukrainian public is aware of trafficking of women, more education about trafficking and sexual exploitation is needed. Most people have a narrow conceptualization of what a victim of trafficking looks like. To be considered a true victim of trafficking, a woman must have been able to be deceived, forced, or coerced at every point. Otherwise, the women are characterized as “willing victims,” or “those who knew what they were getting into.” Few victims will fit into the narrow conceptualization of an “innocent victim.” The public needs to be educated on the definition of a trafficking victim as indicated in the Ukrainian criminal law code, and United Nations Conventions that Ukraine has signed, namely the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish the Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children, which Ukraine has signed (although not ratified).

More education and awareness is needed on the variety of ways traffickers and pimps obtain women and children for the sex industry. Prevention education should include detailed information on how recruiters and traffickers operate, such as the recruitment schemes and common agency fronts they use.

Officials need to be educated on the size, scope, and destruction of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Government officials and law enforcement personnel too often minimize the harm of trafficking and sexual exploitation. They say that there are more serious problems in Ukraine than women going abroad for prostitution.

Education is needed on the harm of various forms of sexual exploitation, including prostitution. To date, all campaigns have focused only on the harm of trafficking. Public awareness campaigns should include information about the violence and trauma of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation as well.

The state needs to ensure that women going abroad have access to information about their legal rights and how to get assistance once they are abroad.

#### **4. Provide Services to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation**

Every agency that provides services to Ukrainian citizens should be trained to identify possible victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, and be able to respond to the victims' needs.

Ukraine was criticized by the U.S. State Department in the 2001 Trafficking in Persons Report for its lack of services for victims of trafficking.

Service providers should be educated on the connection between trafficking and sexual exploitation and alcohol and drug addictions, sexually transmitted infections, and emotional problems that lead to suicide.

Ukraine should provide repatriation services for women returning from abroad who have been victimized. The state should work with nongovernmental organizations to expand services to victims of transnational and domestic trafficking and sexual exploitation

Services to all women and children who are victims of sexual violence and exploitation should include: safe shelter, counseling, medical care, information about employment opportunities, contacts with nongovernmental organizations that can provide short and long term support. Ensure the victims of sexual violence and exploitation who are still in Ukraine receive services.

All services should be voluntary. Victims should not face charges for violations of laws that occurred while she was under the influence or control of recruiters, traffickers, or pimps.

Victims should be guaranteed confidentiality while using any serviced provided.

A witness and victim protection program should be established so that women will feel safe to testify against traffickers and pimps.

The state needs to recognize that the victimization of the women often does not end when the woman has returned home. Recruiters, traffickers, and pimps may still threaten women and their families to ensure they do not go to the police. Threats include exposure of the woman as being a prostitute to her friends and family, or giving pornography made of her to friends and family.

## **5. Increase Law Enforcement Efforts to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Women**

Ukraine needs to take steps at every level to increase the investigation, apprehension, prosecution, conviction, and penalties against trafficker and pimps.

The 2001 Trafficking in Persons Report issued by the U.S. State Department criticized the relatively low number of cases brought against traffickers, and especially the low conviction rate and small penalties (mostly fines) for those convicted. The report acknowledged that Ukraine was hampered in combating trafficking by lack of financial resources and corruption.<sup>161</sup>

Ukraine needs to improve the training and response of law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement agents need training on how to do investigations of traffickers. They need to acquire skills on how to investigate modeling, employment, tourist agencies, and marriage agencies that are the frequent fronts for traffickers. During interviews for this research project, law enforcement agents admitted they were unsure of how to investigate such agencies or determine if they were breaking the law. They said, "We know it is a crime if the girl is under the age of 18. But is a crime if the woman is poor, or the woman consents?" They also said they were aware that travel agencies were part of organized crime groups, but not sure if they were breaking the law, or how to investigate them for trafficking women. They asked for training in investigative techniques.

All law enforcement and border control personnel need training on identifying and investigating trafficking. There are a few specialized anti-trafficking units in Ukraine. They are in Donetsk, Lugansk, Kyiv, and Zaporizhia. These units should receive specialized training so they can service as the experts for other units and train other units.

Prosecutors and judges need training as well on prosecuting cases.

Law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and judges need training on the characteristics of trauma caused by sexual violence. They need to learn specialized techniques for interviewing victims of trafficking, sexual violence, and exploitation.

Laws against pornography producers and distributors need to be enforced. Trafficked women and children are used in the making of pornography. Also, pornographic images and videos are used to threaten and coerce victims while they are under the control of traffickers and pimps, and after they return home, they are used to maintain the victim's silence.

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<sup>161</sup> *Trafficking in Persons Report*, July 2001.

Officials and law enforcement personnel who collaborate with traffickers and pimps should be prosecuted.

Establish victim and witness protection services. Police who were interviewed said that in private conversations people will give them a lot of information about traffickers, but they will not allow them to make an official report for fear of reprisals from traffickers and pimps. This problem emphasizes the need for protection and support services for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Money is needed for equipment and services. The members of one anti-trafficking unit we interviewed said that they did not have basic equipment needed to conduct an investigation, such as a telephone, car, or computer. These are severe problems for Ukraine. Ukraine should call upon destination countries that create the demand for trafficked women and children to assist in providing funds for education and equipment to combat trafficking sending countries.

Investigate the role of the Internet in trafficking women and children. Prosecute traffickers who use the Internet to recruit and advertise women and girls through modeling agencies, marriage agencies, and escort services. Investigate pornographers who use the Internet to distribute child pornography and violate the pornography laws of Ukraine.

## **6. Ratify and Implement the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish the Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children**

Ukraine signed the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish the Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children, but it has not ratified it. The government of Ukraine needs to show that it is serious about combating organized crime and trafficking by ratifying and implementing the series measures listed in the treaty.

The Convention and Protocol should be translated into Ukrainian and made widely available in news media and libraries.

## **7. Develop International Cooperation with Transit and Destination Countries**

At the international level, there needs to genuine cooperation at all necessary levels to counter the transnational trafficking in women, and provide services to victims.

Ukraine should demand accountability from officials in destination or receiving countries for creating a demand for trafficked women and children. Destination countries often lack the political will to stop the importation and exploitation of women. Corruption of officials and law enforcement personnel is often as serious problem in destination countries as well. Ukraine should not bear solely the responsibility for combating the trade in women and children that requires the failure of at least two states for these transnational crimes to continue. In addition, many of the wealthier destination countries have the resources for equipment and training that is lacking in Ukraine.

In solve this transnational problem, international cooperation is needed among law enforcement officials. There is an initiative to draft a bilateral agreement between Ukraine and Greece that will develop protection for victims of trafficking who are being repatriated, and develop cooperation to combat organized crime.

## **8. Encourage Research on All Aspects of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation**

Research on all aspects of trafficking and sexual exploitation is needed so that policy decisions can be based on scientific findings. The trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children is a multi-faceted problem that requires multi- and inter-disciplinary research. The US-Ukraine Research Partnership was a very good beginning and produced valuable understandings of this problem. Such partnerships should be continued.

Joint research projects on trafficking in women and children should be initiated with destination countries to enable Ukraine and the destination countries to understand the dimensions of the problem.

# TRENDS IN ORGANIZED CRIME

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## THE TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL CRIMINAL NEXUS OF TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM UKRAINE

*Donna M. Hughes and Tatyana A. Denisova*

Throughout the 1990s, tens of thousands of Ukrainian women were trafficked into prostitution. This phenomenon was researched by collecting data through interviews and surveys in Ukraine, media reports, governmental and non-governmental (NGO) reports on trafficking, and participant observation in conferences. Trafficking occurs because of a transnational political criminal nexus, which is comprised of individual criminals, organized crime groups, corrupt police and governmental officials, foreign governments, and NGOs. Traffickers' methods of operation are flexible and adapted to ease of recruiting victims, cooperation of corrupt officials, risk of being detected, and profit. In destination countries, victims are controlled by confiscation of travel and identity documents, debt bondage, threats, and violence. Political components of the nexus include foreign governments that support NGOs that ignore the views of civil society in Ukraine, and instead, support the foreign governments' positions on trafficking and prostitution, resulting in a corruption of civil society. Some foreign governments also support changes in laws that enable a legal flow of women into their sex industries.

### Introduction

Over the last decade, tens of thousands of Ukrainian women have been trafficked into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.<sup>1</sup> The buying, selling, and abuse of these women earn traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners billions of dollars each year. Although there has been a global outcry against this activity, there has been little success in stopping it (Robinson 2002). The traffickers continue to operate with impunity because of a transnational political criminal nexus that maintains the flow of women from Ukraine to the sex industries abroad.

The trafficking of women is based on supply and demand between sending and receiving countries. Countries with legal or tolerated sex industries create the demand and are the receiving or destination countries, while countries where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending countries. The number and flow of women are based on a balance between the demand for women for prostitution and the ability of traffickers to recruit women. Although the exact number of victims is unknown, in 1998 the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior estimated that 400,000 Ukrainian women were trafficked during the previous decade (International Organization for Migration 2001).

In countries of the former Soviet Union, the unregulated transition from socialism toward democracy and a market economy enabled organized crime and corrupt officials to seize control of much of the state apparatus and business sector, resulting in the criminalization of the state and economy (Webster 1997, 2000; Williams 1997). Networks of criminals and corrupt officials are significant components of the transnational political criminal nexus. To fully understand the forces that maintain the flow of women from Ukraine, the conceptualization of the nexus has to be expanded beyond the usual bounds of analysis of organized crime and corruption to include the social sector. The social sector of society, referred to as civil society, is made up of nongovernmental organizations, volunteer and community groups, charities, the church, and faith-based groups (Eberly 2000). This paper will describe how corruption of civil society is a component of the political criminal nexus of trafficking in women.

### The Transnational Political Criminal Nexus

The transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking in women extends from individuals at the highest levels of government to the lowliest criminals. The nexus includes government-officials, law enforcement personnel, legal and illegal businesses, individual criminals, organized crime groups, foreign governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Not all activities they engage in are illegal. Not all parts of the nexus collude with each other. Some components play parallel and supporting roles that do not appear to be connected to the others.

The goal of the transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking in women is to make money. The "commodities" and "services" that are bought, sold, abused, and exploited are women and children. The trafficking process begins with the demand for women and children to be used in prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation in the sex industry. Few women enter into prostitution if they have other choices. Where the sex industries are large or the demand for prostitution is high, insufficient numbers of local women can be recruited. The women who enter prostitution out of desperation leave as soon as they have made enough money or better opportunities arise. Engaging in unwanted sexual activity with strangers multiple times per day is physically and emotionally stressful, causing women to become sick or suffer breakdowns (Iliina; Farley 1998: 405-426). Consequently, they are no longer attractive to men or profitable for the pimps (Emke-Pouloupoulos 2001: 22). Where brothel keeping<sup>2</sup> and pimping are illegal, police raids can result in the loss of women. Sometimes women escape. The turnover of women is high; therefore, replacements are needed fairly frequently. Brothel owners, pimps, and pornography producers place orders with traffickers for the number of women they need.

Traffickers select cities and regions in other countries based on the ease with which they can recruit women. The economic decline in most of Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in widespread

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unemployment and poverty. Women, especially, have been politically and economically disenfranchised with few opportunities in the stagnated, criminalized economy and corrupt political system (von Struensee 2002; The MONEE Project 1999). Under these conditions, women are eager to go abroad to find work and take their chances to achieve the Western lifestyles they see in the media (Hughes 2002[b]).

Traffickers operate through employment and travel agencies that are often legally registered. They recruit women for various types of low skilled labor. Also, it is common for traffickers to use former trafficking victims or female members of the organized crime groups as recruiters. They contact friends, acquaintances, and relatives in communities where they are known and trusted. A few women know they will be in prostitution before they leave Ukraine, but are unaware of the violence and exploitation that is the norm in prostitution abroad. Most are recruited under false pretenses.

In some cases, the traffickers smuggle women across the border illegally. But, in most cases, the traffickers obtain the necessary identity and travel documents from other criminals, who produce counterfeit documents, or by working with corrupt officials who supply authentic documents. In some cases, corrupt passport or border control personnel allow women to leave Ukraine with inadequate documents. The traffickers purchase tickets and pay the travel expenses to the destination countries. Later, these expenses will be greatly inflated and the women coerced into prostitution to pay the debt.

In the destination countries, there are corrupt police and government officials in corresponding key positions who collaborate with the traffickers and pimps. Corrupt police and officials accept bribes to allow the illegal flow of women into the destination countries and sex industries, and sometimes fully collaborate in the trafficking operations. They assist the pimps and brothel owners by returning escaping women to brothels, or alert traffickers and pimps of the women's whereabouts.

In destination countries, strategies are devised to protect the sex industries that generate hundreds of millions of dollars per year for the state where prostitution is legal, or for organized crime groups and corrupt officials where the sex industry is illegal. The profits of these legal and illegal sex industries depend on maintaining the flow of foreign women. Here the political components of the transnational political criminal nexus play their role. In destination countries where the state is criminalized, the legislative bodies simply do not pass laws against trafficking (Russia is an example), or corrupt police and officials ignore the laws that exist. Another more long-term strategy of governments of destination countries is to use their power and influence to shape laws and policies on trafficking and prostitution that favor their industries and maintain the flow of women from sending countries. One way foreign governments do this is to corrupt civil society in sending countries to prevent the growth of a grassroots movement that opposes the flow of women to their sex industries.

During the Soviet period, prostitution was not considered a legitimate form of work; instead, it was suppressed and officially abolished. Although some Ukrainian citizens may have sympathy for a woman who is in prostitution to feed her family, mostly, a woman who is or has been a prostitute is highly stigmatized, and prostitution is not viewed as acceptable work. Even before the Soviet revolution, the position of women's NGOs was to combat prostitution and assist women in getting out of prostitution.<sup>3</sup>

Soviet rule suppressed independent women's organizations and charities; consequently, civil society is underdeveloped in Ukraine (Kupryashkina; D'Anieri et al. 1999: 141-165). Still, a number of women's NGOs have formed to oppose trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women in prostitution. This nascent civil society has been corrupted by governments in destination countries by funding NGOs to promote the destination countries' policies on trafficking and prostitution. Their purpose is to legitimize and maintain the flow of women to the sex industries abroad. Thereby, the authentic voices of citizens in sending countries have been supplanted by the voice of the destination countries, resulting in a corruption of civil society.

These different political and criminal components form a nexus that maintains the flow of Ukrainian women into prostitution abroad. The nexus is complex, and there is not collusion among all the components; in fact, there is a struggle for control among some of the components. Some of the components work hand-in-hand in the brutal daily trafficking of women; others work separately, but in parallel, to legitimize the demand for women by the sex industries in destination countries.

In the following sections of this paper, the different components of the political criminal nexus of trafficking in women will be further described and findings of the U.S.-Ukrainian research team will be reported.

### Methods

Research for this paper was undertaken by researchers in Ukraine and the United States as part of the U.S.-Ukraine Research Partnership.<sup>4</sup>

Data was collected through interviews and surveys in Ukraine, from media articles, governmental and nongovernmental reports on trafficking, and participant observation in conferences and meetings.

Researchers from Ukraine examined forty-six criminal cases of trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation and statistical data from several Ministries and agencies. They conducted a survey of 556 people on their attitudes toward and knowledge of trafficking of women. They conducted another survey of 160 young women graduates of high schools, colleges, and gymnasiums who would comprise a high-risk category for recruitment by traffickers. Researchers interviewed sixty-eight people who were victims of crimes related to trafficking in women in six regional cities: Donetsk (4), Zaporozhe (16), Lvov (19), Kharkov (6), Kherson (6), and Chernigov (17).

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They interviewed eighteen relatives of victims of trafficking in five regional cities: Zaporizhia (8), Lvov (4), Kharkov (2), Kherson (1), and Chernigov (3).

To learn more about the recruitment and trafficking of women, women in prostitution and pimps in Ukraine were interviewed. Also, sex industry businesses, such as European-style nightclubs that featured strip shows, were visited and the owners interviewed. Various Ukrainian and international experts who had knowledge of victims and perpetrators of trafficking and prostitution were interviewed. Materials from various sources inside Ukraine, and from the countries of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Latvia, Turkey, Japan, and the United States, were collected and analyzed.

The researchers in Ukraine incurred risks while collecting this data. In one instance, a pimp threatened one of the research assistants for trying to talk to the women. Most of the sources spoke to the researchers on the condition that they remain anonymous, including their affiliation with any official office or agency. Therefore, they can be identified only in the broadest terms in this report.

### **Criminal Components of the Transnational Political Criminal Nexus**

#### *Traffickers, Organized Crime, and Corruption*

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine as a state, organized crime and corruption have thrived in the unregulated environment. Officials from the former Soviet government have maintained power and created alliances with the new "oligarchs," resulting in a criminalization of the state and economy. Corruption in Ukraine is pervasive and systemic. On the Transparency International's 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index, Ukraine was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world—eighty-third out of ninety-one countries (Transparency International 2001). Out of fourteen Eastern European countries, Ukraine was considered the most corrupt (Graf Lambsdorff 2001). Organized crime networks flourish in this corrupt environment. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 1991 there were 260 organized crime groups; by 2000, there were 960 (Yarmish 2002: 4). One of the activities of some of these groups is the trafficking of women.

Sixty-five percent of cases of trafficking of women from Ukraine was carried out by organized crime networks. They traffic women because it is a high-profit business with low investment. The networks are highly organized, have large-scale operations, and are connected to corrupt officials. The networks delegate specialized tasks related to trafficking in women, such as recruitment of women, preparation of documents, organization of travel, and delivery of the women.

These criminal networks are also involved in other criminal activities. They traffic drugs, stolen cars, and guns; conduct robberies; and are frequently involved in murders or contract killings. Their main activity is usually racketeering.

The size of the groups varies throughout Ukraine. The largest criminal groups in Ukraine with twenty to thirty members are in Odessa. In other regions, the groups are smaller, with five or six members. The criminal groups have territories they operate in, and are known to collaborate with officials who provide them with protection and authentic documents for travel.

Organized crime groups have databases of potential victims for trafficking from sources such as applications from women for beauty contests or marriage agencies. The databases include photographs of the women, height, weight, and personality traits.

Traffickers in Ukraine receive from US \$800 to \$2,000 per woman they deliver to pimps abroad. The value of the woman depends on her appearance and the destination country: The higher the economic development of the destination country, the higher the price that will be paid for her.

Eighty percent of the traffickers are Ukrainian citizens, and about 60 percent are women. The traffickers are usually not former criminals and have never been in prison. If they were known criminals, it would be more difficult for them to leave the country. The traffickers usually have good organizational skills; some worked as social organizers in the former Soviet Union. As a result, they are often well known and respected people. They often own licensed businesses, such as travel agencies. They are sometimes affiliated with "marriage" or "introduction" agencies. They usually have traveled abroad for commercial purposes in the past, and have established links to officials and pimps in destination countries. They know the market for women in Ukraine and abroad. They are familiar with the laws of each country, and know how to protect themselves from the police, either by working around laws or with corrupt officials.

#### *Traffickers' Methods of Recruiting Victims*

Traffickers rely on the poor economy to create circumstances under which they can recruit women. Police officials who were interviewed thought that women were easily recruited to go abroad because of high unemployment in Ukraine, not because the woman wanted to be prostitutes. Because of these economic circumstances, if someone promises a woman a job that pays US \$100/month, she will probably accept the "opportunity." Police officers said they were aware of married women with two or three children who had to earn money, so turned to prostitution.

Most victims of trafficking are between seventeen and twenty-six years of age. They are usually afraid to talk about their experiences. Even if they were coerced and beaten, they do not make reports to the police. Of the victims who were interviewed, only 12 percent tried to make a report to the police. They said the police and officials are corrupt and may give information about them to the traffickers. They fear retaliation from the traffickers, many of

whom are members of organized crime groups. The victims believe it is too difficult to prove that a crime has been committed against them. They know there is inadequate protection for victims who make reports to the police. Also, they do not want their family and friends to know they were prostitutes. Even after they return from abroad, they say they worked as shop clerks or waitresses while abroad.

Approximately 80 percent of the victims were unemployed when they left Ukraine, and 60 percent of them remained unemployed upon their return. In the earlier years, victims were recruited from the cities, but more recently, the recruiters are moving into the countryside to small towns and villages to recruit women for work abroad. In agricultural areas, often there are no wages at all.

The pimps often use former victims of trafficking to recruit new victims. Friends and acquaintances that return from abroad with stories of how much money they made recruit women for pimps. The two Ukrainian pimps who were interviewed had formerly been prostitutes. They had little sympathy for the new victims, saying that rapes and beatings had been done to them, too. One pimp worked in Russia; the other in Greece.

The pimp who worked in central Moscow viewed herself as a "business-woman."

From 1995 to 1998, I was a pimp in Moscow. I started by getting eight women from one of the pimps who left. The women were being raped and needed someone to organize them. Later, I had up to 20, even 25, women working for me. ...I recruited women from Zaporizhia and other parts of Ukraine. I paid \$100 for each girl who was sent. One woman recruited for me from Zaporizhia. Over the three-year period, about 15 women came from Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, L'vov, and other cities in Ukraine. Women were also sent from Belarus and Moldova. Russian women were sent from Staropol, Irkutsk and other Russian cities and regions. When the girls first arrived, I kept them in a flat for one month. I had them watch pornography to learn what to do. I spent US\$2000-\$3000 on clothes for them. I took their passports until they repaid me the money. I taught the women how to treat men. How to act. How to talk. ... Some of the women only stayed 2-3 months; some were with me the entire time I was there.

Women are frequently trafficked through travel or employment agencies. The agencies are usually legally registered. There are some travel agencies that are not legally registered, but when questioned by police claim that they only provide consultation services and therefore do not need a license. Traffickers sometimes extract money from the women before they leave by charging them as much of the travel expenses as the woman can pay. The women borrow money from relatives and friends to pay the expenses. According to police, 70 percent of trafficked women travel on authentic (not counterfeit) documents, such as tourist visas. The traffickers obtain these documents for the victims from corrupt officials.

The women appear to go abroad voluntarily and legally on tourist visas, but they do not return. There were reports of women being moved one at a

time, and in other cases, in small groups. One police officer said that the traffickers move one woman at a time, sometimes two, but usually not more than three at a time. If the woman has authentic travel documents, she usually travels by herself and is given a phone number or address for a contact in the destination or transit country. In a few cases, traffickers collect women in small groups to be taken abroad by car or van. The movement of the women in groups is based on economy of scale, because bribes, documents, and travel arrangements are less expensive for a number of women rather than one at a time. There were reports of tourist groups of women who had gone to Turkey in which half of the group did not return.

If the woman has counterfeit documents, her visa has expired, or she was smuggled into the destination country, she may be afraid to return home because she does not have the proper documents.

Traffickers also recruit teen girls and children. In a few cases, children have been abducted and sold through illegal adoptions. There have been several cases in which parents sold their children to traffickers who resold them abroad. More commonly, traffickers present themselves to parents as representatives of foreign modeling schools for girls. Girls are invited to auditions by modeling agencies. The "modeling schools" in Ukraine offer to train girls in modeling and social skills. Girls, some as young as ten, are recruited for training classes. In one case, a twelve-year-old girl studied at such a "modeling school" for five months. She was taught how to walk and pose. Photographs were taken in poses that suggested that the girls were being groomed for pornography and/or prostitution. One girl was photographed in only her bra and panties, and was told that the photographs were being sent to the United Arab Emirates. When a suspicious parent complained to the police about the activities of the "school," the agency changed its name, but continued to operate. In these cases, parents are deceived and do not know that their daughter will be sold to a brothel.

Traffickers are known to operate as religious groups to recruit girls in Ukraine. In Kherson, there was a case of two "missionaries" from the United States who came to teach children English and the Bible. The children and parents were told that if the children learned English they could go to the United States to continue their studies. Parents eventually discovered that the children had been shown pornography, sexually abused, and prepared for prostitution. The teens and young adults ranged in age from fourteen to twenty. The girls were told that the group believed it was acceptable for adults to have sex with children. They were instructed not to write to relatives and to end all relationships with friends and relatives. The group planned to take the young women and girls to Italy. Their plan was discovered, but they escaped before they were arrested. Even as the traffickers were departing, they told some of the children they would send visas for them to join them abroad.

Homeless children are extremely vulnerable to recruitment by traffickers. In 2000, there were an estimated 100,000 homeless children in Ukraine. Many

of them became homeless after their alcoholic or destitute parents sold their apartments for money. Little is known about this population in Ukraine, although information from Russia indicates homeless children and orphans are frequently recruited by pornographers and traffickers (Hughes 2002 [a]).<sup>5</sup>

Approximately 70 percent of women are trafficked by means of sophisticated deceptions. The traffickers present credible, systematic plans so that victims have little suspicion that their destination is the sex industry. Mostly, the women are offered work abroad as a waitress or dancer. Traffickers approach beauty contest participants with offers of contracts with top foreign modeling agencies.

Traffickers are so adept at deceiving victims that sometimes the victim does not fully understand who was involved in selling her into prostitution. For example, the researchers found cases in which the traffickers recruited women for work abroad in typical jobs such as waitress or dancer. The trafficker delivered the woman to the workplace and the woman worked for a week or two doing the job she expected. The trafficker returned and asked her if she was satisfied with the job. She was asked to sign a document indicating that she was satisfied with the service the "agency" provided in finding her a job abroad. After the trafficker departed with the signed document, the situation rapidly changed. The woman was beaten and forced into prostitution. Sometimes they were moved to other countries. The first job was just a stop in a transit country (maybe while necessary documents are being prepared), and another layer of deception was added to protect the trafficker from Ukraine. Often the victim only blamed the people in the transit or destination country for forcing her into prostitution and continued to insist the person/agency from Ukraine who assisted her was not involved.

In another case, a woman was offered a job in Turkey, where she was employed as a shop clerk in a clothing store. For the first week or two, the supervisor helped her learn the new job. Then she was given a quota on the number of items she had to sell each day. If she did not sell enough, a debit was assigned to her. When the amount of the debit rose to a large amount, she was forced into prostitution to pay the "debt."

Trafficking in women is highly flexible. Criminals quickly adapt to different opportunities and in response to risks, so traffickers may operate one way in one region, but differently in another region. The same group may change their tactics from year to year. Strategies and techniques change according to profit, ease of recruiting victims, cooperation of corrupt officials, and risk of being detected.

#### *Connection Between Local Prostitution and the Transnational Trafficking of Women*

In major cities and trade centers, where there are foreign visitors, organized crime groups control prostitution. But generally, prostitution is not a major activity of organized crime inside Ukraine. The economy is so poor, and un-

employment is so high, that men cannot pay much money to buy prostitutes. The average price for a prostitute inside Ukraine is US \$3, so the amount of money that can be earned through prostitution is relatively small. Other criminal activities are more profitable.

Women in prostitution in Ukraine were interviewed to determine if traffickers tried to recruit them to go abroad. Six women who stood along the highway and were known to be narcotics addicts were interviewed. None of them said they had been invited to go abroad, nor would they go, if asked, because they were too afraid. They had heard many stories about what happened to women who went abroad. One woman said, "It is better to stay here, where I know things." Another woman said her friend went to Turkey. She told her that the men are violent there, so she said it was better to be in prostitution in Zaporizhia.

The women with narcotics addictions do not appear to be targeted for recruitment by transnational traffickers. Given their poor health, deteriorating appearance, and drug dependency, traffickers probably view them as poor investments to take abroad. Although traffickers and pimps frequently pressure women to use drugs and manipulate women's drug use, at some point, their physical dependency on drugs takes such a toll that she loses her value for pimps. Police confirmed this by saying that no one wants to take the drug-addicted women abroad.

Two women in prostitution from a nightclub and the city center talked about their friends being recruited to go abroad. The woman from the nightclub said she knew four women who went abroad. One went to Cyprus. She has now returned and reportedly "made a lot of money." Two went to Turkey. They told her they are living with Turkish men and are all right. One went to Egypt and has disappeared. A relative went to find her, but was unable to do so. She said that someone tried to recruit her to go to Italy, but she was too afraid because of the mass media stories about sexual slavery and what she has heard from her friends.

The woman from the city center said that she had heard of women being taken to Serbia, Turkey, Germany, and Latin America. She said she knew one woman who went to Turkey for three years. After earning US \$7,000, the woman and her friends were deported because the owner did not want to pay them the money. They came back to Ukraine with nothing. She had also heard of women going to Moscow, and then to Norway and Finland. A pimp arranges a bus that takes the women across the border. She said that each spring and autumn recruiters come and ask her and her friends if they want to go abroad. The recruiters promise the women an apartment, a bodyguard, and US \$10,000 per month. So far, she has always declined the offer because she is afraid of what might happen.

From these women's experience, it appears as if women in prostitution know about trafficking in women. Only the healthier, more attractive women without drug addictions are targeted for recruitment.

The police did not think that international pimping, meaning pimps moving women from Ukraine to other countries, occurred very often. More commonly, traffickers operated by recruiting women for employment, and then deceived them and forced them into prostitution once they were abroad.

Among the women who were willing to go abroad for prostitution, there was a flow of rumors about where the conditions were the best or the worst. Once one destination country got a poor reputation, the women tried to find one that was supposedly better. For example, after women heard that conditions in Moscow were bad, women were more willing to be recruited to go to the United Arab Emirates. In Middle Eastern countries, Russian and Ukrainian women were reportedly paid more, and for a while the rumor was that Arab men treated the women better than the Chechens. Both the women and police said that the conditions for women in prostitution were the worst in Turkey and Yugoslavia. The women said they had heard they are more likely to be mutilated in Turkey or enslaved in Greece. If the women had a choice, they preferred Western European destinations. Each woman thought that the experience would be different for her, that she would be able to control the situation, or that the conditions would be different in another country.

#### *Destination Countries for Women Trafficked from Ukraine*

Frequent destination countries for trafficked women from Ukraine are: Turkey, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Israel, Syria, and China.

There are no official records on the number of Ukrainian women deported from other countries. There are a few numbers from organizations that assist returning victims. In October 2000, there were 185 women returned to the Kyiv airport by authorities in other countries. Mostly, the women came from Turkey, Israel, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Switzerland (International Organization for Migration 2001). In 2000, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted eighty-one victims of trafficking to return to Ukraine—twenty-seven from Bosnia and Herzegovina, eighteen from Germany, eleven from Bulgaria, nine from Kosovo, and eight from Italy. In the two-year period of 1999 through 2000, La Strada assisted forty-four women in returning to Ukraine (International Organization for Migration 2001). In the mid-1990s, two-thirds of the victims that The Foundation Against Trafficking in the Netherlands assisted were from central and eastern Europe, including Ukraine (Bruinsma and Meershoek. 1997: 108).

A common destination country for Ukrainian women is Greece. There the demand for women in prostitution is increasing, which creates the demand for trafficked women and makes it so profitable. According to one survey from 1991 to 1996, the "prostitutes clientele" increased by 60 percent and the number of "promiscuous sexual contacts" increased by 100 percent (Lazarus 1998).

The prostitution market is demand driven. The demand comes from brothel, clubs or bars owners who pay the suppliers and put women to work. Above all, it comes from clients. Collapse of values and the view that with money one can buy everything, even the bodies of underage children, characterize the clients. During the 1990s, the clients' preference for a young submissive, docile and obedient coloured woman changed. Now the choice is for a woman from Central and Eastern Europe: white, beautiful, educated, but poverty-stricken, so that she may comply with all their wishes (*Emke-Poulopoulos 2001: 31*).

According to the U.S. State Department, Greece has the worst record for trafficking women and lack of effort to combat trafficking of all the countries in the European Union (Bureau for International Narcotics 2001: 86). In Greece in 1999, fifty-seven Ukrainian women were identified as victims of trafficking by police (Greek Police report 2001). In 2000, there were forty-one official cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation involving 125 victims. Of the 335 foreign women arrested, fifty-six, the second highest number, were from Ukraine. As of early 2001, thirty-six Ukrainian victims or their families contacted the Ukrainian NGO La Strada for assistance in returning from Greece (Human Rights Watch 2001: 13). In one case when an arrest was made, the women involved were from Ukraine, Albania, Denmark, Russia, Lithuania, Nigeria, and Greece ("Prostitution arrests" 2001).

Ukrainians operate as traffickers and pimps in destination countries. According to a police report, Ukrainians are among the top six nationalities of pimps operating in Greece (*Emke-Poulopoulos 2001: 28*). In one case in Greece, a Greek man and Ukrainian woman, assisted by a Bulgarian woman and two Albanian men, were arrested for running a trafficking and prostitution ring. Two Bulgarian women were found captive and freed ("Police break up international racket" 2001).

The women trafficked to Greece are subjected to extreme violence, resulting in emotional and physical trauma.

Prostitution in Greece 'entails new heights of violence as well as degradation and exploitation of the prostitute.' ...They are deprived of their human rights and freedoms, are forbidden to leave the places without permission, threatened by deportation, violence and humiliation if they ask the authorities for help. They may be locked into [an] apartment or secret rooms in bars. The newcomers are under surveillance of a bodyguard and are obliged to give all their earnings to their pimps. Sometimes the methods used to constrain women into prostitution are reminiscent of the concentration camps of the nazi regime, 'small dachaus': There is a preparatory period of three months during which they are raped, beaten, and without adequate food and water. A great number of the women bear the marks of severe beatings (*Emke-Poulopoulos 2001: 19*)...36% of the foreign prostitutes are characterised by clear loss of the sense of space - only 27% knew in which neighborhood of Athens they were, and 32% did not know where Athens is! With regard to the sense of time, 33% did not know what day of the week it was, 56% did not know the date (up to 8 days out) and 10% did not know the month. Some of them did not know the year (see Non-aligned 1999). Because of lack of services and police intervention, there are reports that there are only four ways for

women to escape from a trafficking/prostitution ring: 1) become unprofitable to pimps because of emotional breakdown (as a result of trauma); 2) become unprofitable to pimps because of advanced stage of pregnancy; 3) be helped to escape by a client; and 4) death (*Emke-Poulopoulos 2001: 21*). Suicides are sometimes reported in local newspapers (*Emke-Poulopoulos 2001: 22*). When women do escape from pimps or traffickers, they find little assistance from the Ukrainian embassies. The Ukrainian consul said that they do not have the money to send victims home when they ask for assistance (*Human Rights Watch 2001: 13*).

In discussing trafficking, most of the focus has been on destination countries outside the former Soviet Union. In fact, Russia is a destination country for women trafficked from Ukraine. Some of the Ukrainian women who went to Moscow have been killed or disappeared. In Russia, women are beaten and have to tolerate rude, abusive behavior from men. Often the women are unable to tolerate the prostitution and abuse. After a few months when their debts were repaid they are allowed to leave, but often, the criminals take the money they earned. Usually, the women were happy to be allowed to go home, even without the money.

The Ukrainian trafficker-pimp who worked in central Moscow described the way women were controlled. She had a set of rules and a system of fines to economically punish the women who broke the rules.

I was strict with the girls. They received fines of approximately \$50 for things such as being drunk, taking narcotics, taking men to the apartment, not keeping the apartment clean. I expelled some women. They only made problems. They brought men to the apartment, began taking drugs, and spent all their money on heroin. Some were not in good form. They didn't buy new clothes, had poor body shape, and were not interested in their job.... The women could refuse anal sex, but had to do everything else.

One of the ways pimps control women in prostitution is by threatening them with exposure to family and friends. The former trafficker-pimp gave the researchers Polaroid pictures that had been taken of a girl that appears to be in her teens. She said:

Most of the women's families don't know they are in prostitution. The women were often mean to each other. Sometimes the women would blackmail a girl they didn't like with photographs. They punished each other for bad behavior.

The photographs show women humiliating a girl in which the victim could be recognized, but not the perpetrators. In one photograph, they forced the woman to sit naked on the floor with a used sanitary napkin wrapped around her head. In the next photo someone is pressing the girl's face into the buttocks of another woman. In another, the girl is on her back on the floor with a naked woman pressing her crotch into the woman's face. In the last, the victim's face is being forced into a stream of urine from another woman. These photo-

graphs are used to coerce the girl into doing what the pimp wants, or risk having them sent to her family.

The former pimp was reluctant to talk about violence against the women. She tried to minimize it and shift the blame to the women.

It was high risk for women to go with clients. There were cases in which a woman would go with one man and when they arrived at the hotel or apartment, there would be 7-8 men in the room. I had a special telephone that could determine who was calling. I instructed the girls that in situations like that to call me and I would call the police. ...Some of the women provoke the men by getting drunk and not behaving well, so the men will beat them. Some women were bought for group sex. A lot of men buy prostitutes and drugs.

When asked what happened to women if they were beaten, she said they were taken to the hospital, but only if they needed treatment.

#### *Organized Crime and Corruption in Destination Countries*

The transnational political criminal nexus of trafficking includes organized crime and corrupt officials in destination countries. In several destination countries for Ukrainian women, officials and police have been caught assisting traffickers. In Germany in 1996, the chief of the Special Commission for Organized Crime in Germany was convicted for helping women destined for brothels cross the border between Poland and Germany (Dragomir 2001). In Cyprus in 2001, the former immigration chief was found guilty of accepting bribes to issue work permits to foreign women who worked as strippers in clubs, some of whom were forced into prostitution ("Immigration chief in stripper racket" 2001). In Greece, a number of high-ranking officials have been arrested for involvement in trafficking and prostitution rings. Government and police officials' professional organization acknowledge that police collaborate with trafficking networks in Greece (Human Rights Watch 2001: 19). To combat police corruption, an Internal Affairs Bureau was established in 1999. In its first annual report it stated that 146 charges were brought against seventy-four police officers, approximately half of whom were involved in granting residence permits to undocumented migrants and prostitution rings (Human Rights Watch 2001: 20). In Athens, a former chief of police was charged in a case involving thirty brothels that housed women from countries of the former Soviet Union ("Charges against former police chief..." 2001). In another case, a group known as the "meat machine" in Trikala and Karditsa, Greece, thought to have traded 1,200 foreign women for prostitution over a ten-year period, included police officials and someone from the prosecutor's office. The police provided protection for the clubs in exchange for sexual use of the women ("Probe into huge prostitution racket" 2001).

In addition to assisting traffickers moving women into the destination country and protecting pimps and brothel owners from arrest, corrupt officials and police assist the pimps in recapturing women once they escape or are rescued from brothels. The officials involved in deporting women work in collaboration with organized crime groups to recapture women who have escaped or are being deported (Human Rights Watch 2001: 15). Sending countries, such as Ukraine, are often poor and do not have enough resources to pay for airfares for the victims to return home. Instead, the women are given bus or train tickets. When these types of ground transportation are used, there have been cases of organized crime gang members intercepting them and returning them to prostitution. A Ukrainian woman deported from Greece was kidnapped, along with six other women, from the first train station in Bulgaria by the "Bulgarian mafia" (Kalliri 2001). According to one source, 80 percent of women who are deported by train are returned to Greece within forty-eight hours (Marnelou 1999: 20). Women are forced back into prostitution in the same country or sold to traffickers/pimps in other countries.

The former Ukrainian trafficker-pimp who worked in Moscow was part of an organized crime group. She described how prostitution was organized in central Moscow and its reliance on corrupt officials and police protection:

I paid \$6000 a month to the chief pimp in central Moscow. She paid money to the police. The chief pimp in central Moscow controlled 40 pimps. Each pimp had 7-20 women. They worked near the big hotels. The police gave the chief pimp protection. ... If you didn't cooperate with the pimps, you would have no clients. They would interfere with your moneymaking. You would be removed from central Moscow.

The trafficking of women for prostitution relies extensively on corrupt police and officials. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to move so many women across borders and abuse and exploit them in so many public establishments without the cooperation of the police and/or officials.

#### **Political Components of the Transnational Political Criminal Nexus**

The political components of the transnational political criminal nexus carry out their role by 1) supporting the creation, growth, and "voice" of anti-trafficking NGOs that support the views of the destination countries; and 2) changing laws and policies so that the flow of women from sending countries, like Ukraine, to the sex industries in destination countries is legitimized and legalized.

#### *Governments of Destination Countries*

The demand for women to be used in prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation in destination countries is the driving force behind trafficking.

Governments of most destination countries consistently act, either overtly or covertly, to protect their sex industries.

In the Netherlands, a major destination country in Western Europe, there are 2,000 brothels and numerous escort services, using an estimated 30,000 women (Bennetto 2001; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment 2000). Not enough local or EU women can be recruited; therefore, 60 to 70 percent of the women in prostitution in the Netherlands are from outside the EU (Daley 2001; HP-De Tijd 2001). A high percentage of these women are trafficked women. According to one study, 79 percent of women in prostitution indicated that they were in prostitution due to some degree of force (The Dutch Institute of Social Sexological Research 2000: 226-227). From 1997 to 2000, the national police of the Netherlands (KLPD) reported that there were 1,350 traffickers operating in the Netherlands. They earned 118 million Euros, while 65 percent of the trafficked women earned no money at all (van Dijk 2002).

The Netherlands legalized brothels in October 2000. According to research in Groningen, the Netherlands, conducted between January 2001 and July 2002, legalization of brothels has increased the trafficking of women to this city because pimps are dispersing the illegal women to circuits, escort services, and private houses outside the areas of regulated "window prostitution" ("More trafficking in women ..." 2002). The trafficked women do not have EU passports and can no longer work in the legal, regulated brothels. Many trafficked women are now in street prostitution in an area known as the "tippelzone" ("Tippelzone comes apart ..." 2002).

In the Netherlands, prostitution and related forms of sexual exploitation are a US \$1 billion a year industry making up 5 percent of the Dutch economy. According to a Netherlands' government report distributed at a trafficking in women conference in Kyiv, Ukraine:

"In the last thirty years, prostitution in The Netherlands has tripled in size and economic importance en [sic] has become a relative [sic] open and integrated segment of society" ("*Country Report of The Netherlands ...*" 2000).

The Netherlands has taken a lead role in normalizing the prostitution of women and indicating that it will create a legal apparatus to maintain the flow of women from Ukraine, and other sending countries, to its brothels.

The legalization of brothels put the Netherlands in violation of the United Nations Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), of which it is a signer.<sup>6</sup> In its 2000 compliance report to the CEDAW committee, the government defended the legalization of prostitution and criticized the Convention. The report states "prostitution is in and of itself no problem and can't be regarded as a form of violence against women." The Netherlands criticized CEDAW for regarding prostituted women as victims and added that the government of the Netherlands has now rejected that view

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(Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment 2000: 215). Further, the report states that "exploitation of prostitution [pimping] is also not considered a problem by the government as long as no force is involved" (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment 2000: 212). The Netherlands challenged CEDAW's prohibition of the exploitation of prostitution by saying there was a need to distinguish between "good" and "bad" exploitation, claiming that the Convention is not clear which type of exploitation is prohibited.

With the Netherlands government defending "good exploitation," it could then move on to how it was going to legally maintain the flow of foreign women to its brothels. In Kyiv, Ukraine, at a conference on trafficking in women, a representative of the Netherlands defended the demand for and exploitation of women in prostitution: "The demand is already there. We can't eradicate the demand. We will regulate it. Grant permits. Make them pay taxes" (Hofstra 2000). To get around the lack of a local supply of women for the brothels, he explained that the flow of women from sending countries could be legalized: "EU citizens can work there legally. Other countries may have women with working skills that will benefit the Netherlands. We could create special permits that will allow foreign nationals to engage in prostitution" (Hofstra 2000).

Several proposals have already been made on how to legally maintain the flow of foreign women to the brothels. One suggestion is that non-European Union women will get special permits to work in the sex industry in the Netherlands "like seasonal workers and IT-specialists" (Bodelier 2001). Some suggest that the market of the sex industry should be allowed to determine the demand and that work permits be issued based on the demand.

The implicit demand that the state issues legal work permits to foreign prostitutes would mean that 'the market' decided on job vacancies and that there are no reasons to question the logic of the consumer market. If the consumer decides and if there is a free labour market then consequently labour can fulfil the demands in the market. ... this led to the suggestion to the Ministry of Justice to honour market demands and find a quota system as the Dutch prostitution market demands a variety of "bodies" (*Dutting n.d.*).

Already agents have offered to assist in fulfilling the demand through a quota of work permits. Hans Scholtes, Director of Mr A de Graafstichting, an organization that claims it supports the rights of prostitutes in the Netherlands, said, "There is a huge demand for foreign women." He has offered to create an agency that mediates between pimps and foreign women (HP-De Tijd 2001).

Another destination country for Ukrainian women is Germany. In December 2001, Germany legalized brothels (Broomby 2001). Currently, there are 400,000 women in prostitution in Germany (Omelaniuk and Baerten 1999). Seventy-five percent of them are foreign nationals (International Organization for Migration 1996). Eighty percent of the trafficked women in Germany are from Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>7</sup> The Women and Families Ministry es-

timates that the women in prostitution make US \$4.5 billion per year for the bars, clubs, and brothels (Broomby 2001). In 1993, there were 517 cases of illegal sex slave trade; in 1996, the number was 1,094 (The German Family Ministry 1998). The increase in the number of cases represents an increase in police action against trafficking as well as an increase in trafficking.

Although the Netherlands has taken a lead in normalizing and legalizing the flow of foreign women into its sex industries, other influential destination countries, such as Germany and the United States, are supporting this shift from abolishing trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution to only opposing the overt violence and criminality and redefining and legalizing the remainder. A set of recommendations from a policy forum convened by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) at the U.S. State Department in August 2000 supported this trend to redefine prostitution as a form of labor and change migration laws to allow a flow of women for prostitution from Eastern and Central Europe (Ram 2000). Under the guise of "putting an end to the trafficking of women in the NIS and CEE," the demand for women in destination countries was legitimized: "Migrating sex workers are simply responding to a demand for their labor" (Ram 2000: 2). Legalization of prostitution was supported as a solution to the multiple forms of violence inherent in trafficking and prostitution: "Thus, some believe decriminalizing sex work may reduce the vulnerability of women employed in such work." (Ram 2000: 4). These recommendations from policy makers and governmental bodies in destination countries are made without the support, or even awareness, of the majority of people in sending countries, like Ukraine. These types of changes will result in traffickers, although called by another name, being able to maintain the flow of women from sending countries to the brothels of the destination countries.

#### *The Corruption of Civil Society*

The linkage between the governments of destination countries and NGOs in sending countries makes up a component of the transnational political criminal nexus. As discussed above, destination countries have a stake in protecting their sex industries and maintaining the flow of women from sending countries. One way of promoting their interests is to fund NGOs in sending countries that promote the destination country's point of view on prostitution and trafficking. It is not in the interests of governments that overtly or covertly protect their sex industries to give money to NGOs that oppose the flow of tens of thousands women to their brothels, or give a voice to groups who speak out against the abuse and exploitation of women.

As a leader in legalization of the sex industry, the Netherlands saw an advantage to funding NGOs in sending countries that will warn potential victims about the worst criminals, provide an infrastructure for returning the victims, and promote the interests of the Netherlands' sex industry ("*Country Report of The Netherlands ...*" 2000).

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The Netherlands' sex industry is best served by finding alternative ways to maintain their source of women that excludes the organized crime groups, and diverts the profits of trafficking to legitimate agents. According to the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Netherlands:

We must communicate over ways of warning potential victims and of the alternatives they can be offered. But also on how to restrict and 'cream off' the profits generated by human trafficking and on how to increase the risks taken by perpetrators (*Smit 2000*).

At a conference on trafficking of women in Ukraine, the representative of the Netherlands told the audience about the role his government is playing in funding NGOs. "The Netherlands was the first to provide funding to NGOs...the Netherlands provides 80 percent of the funding for La Strada-Ukraine" (Hofstra 2000). The Netherlands country report states, "The NGO 'La Strada' has an important role to fulfill in raising awareness among possible victims in Eastern Europe..." The Netherlands funds Stichting tegen Vrouwenhandel (Foundation Against Trafficking in Women) to build a network of NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe:

[T]he Foundation Against Trafficking in Women...works closely with the la Strada programme...comprising a number of NGO's in Central and Eastern Europe, works towards making the issue of trafficking in women visible and, from a human rights perspective, bringing the problem to the attention of the public and governments involved. The la Strada projects also work towards prevention by providing information and organising activities to return victims to their country of origin. La Strada projects have been set up in Poland, the Czech Republic, the Ukraine and Bulgaria. The staff of these projects meet regularly to exchange experiences. They also train the staff of NGOs in this field in other Central and Eastern European countries (*Smit 2000*).

These NGOs do important, needed work on prevention and awareness of trafficking and assisting victims to return home. Unfortunately, in setting their policies on prostitution and trafficking, these well-funded NGOs do not consult Ukrainian women or citizens in general, but adopt the positions of their funders. For example, in September 1998, in a televised debate on prostitution, La Strada-Ukraine promoted the legalization of prostitution against DANA, a less well-funded grassroots Ukrainian NGO, which opposed that view (Travina 1998).

As discussed earlier, prostitution has not been a legitimate form of work in the Soviet era, or before that. Prohibition of prostitution has been the policy in this region for hundreds of years. Even though the general public recognizes the economic hardship and high unemployment, there is no indication that people in general have changed their belief that prostitution is harmful for women, men, or society (Iliina and Kalugin 2002). The majority of Ukrainians, and people from other sending countries, oppose the flow of women to the sex industries in destination countries.

Surveys on the public's awareness and views on trafficking and prostitution abroad, particularly of women and girls, reveal a very different attitude than that promoted by NGOs funded by destination countries. In Ukraine, a survey of the general public revealed polarized attitudes toward women in prostitution abroad.<sup>8</sup> Eighty-five percent of those surveyed indicated they were aware of trafficking in women from Ukraine. Twelve percent said there was no trafficking in women because the women chose to go abroad. Concerning their attitude toward the women, 78 percent said the woman was the victim of a crime who required assistance. The remaining 22 percent said the woman is immoral, and had no sympathy for her if she is victimized. None of the respondents thought trafficking and prostitution abroad was a form of work. There is a stigma against women who are in, or have been in, prostitution. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said they would not maintain contact with a daughter if they knew she was in prostitution.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a survey of 1,189 women and girls, aged fifteen to thirty-five, in ten urban regions of Ukraine. Although many young women are eager to travel abroad to seek jobs, prostitution was viewed as absolutely unacceptable. When asked if "a job in the sex industry" was an "acceptable job abroad," none of the women and girls in any age group (ages fifteen to seventeen, eighteen to nineteen, twenty to twenty-four, twenty-five to thirty-five) said yes. None of the women in age categories from eighteen to thirty-five thought being a "dancer" or "stripper" was an "acceptable job abroad." However, all of the girls, aged fifteen to seventeen, indicated that it was (International Organization for Migration 1998).

Grassroots NGOs that represent these views of the citizens on prostitution and trafficking do not have the resources and access to conferences and policy forums that destination countries give the NGOs that represent their views.

In 1999 at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations, and World Movement of Mothers called for governments to work toward suppressing the trafficking of women and girls by implementing the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.<sup>9</sup> The convention states: "prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and endanger the welfare of the individual, the family and the community" (see Convention for the Suppression). The 1949 Convention explicitly prohibits the exploitation of prostitution (pimping). Ukraine has signed and ratified the 1949 Convention (see Status of Ratification). In contrast to this position, La Strada-Ukraine has publicly criticized the 1949 Convention in a world forum as being against the needs and rights of Ukrainian women (Levchenko 2000). La Strada-Ukraine has also blocked conference resolutions that criticize the sex industries or state that prostitution is harmful to women.

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Corruption occurs when someone in a position of authority or influences uses their power to benefit themselves and other parties rather than the ones they are empowered to represent. Corruption thrives in environments where civil society is weak and the public institutions, in this case NGOs, are not accountable to their constituencies. When NGOs in sending countries work to benefit destination countries instead of the women of their country, that is the corruption of civil society. In a democratic society, when there is police and official corruption, the problem can be countered by a vigorous, empowered civil society that speaks out against corruption through the ballot box, the free press, or public demonstrations (Hellman and Kaufmann 2001). Yet, in Ukraine high-ranking politicians are able to withstand scandals that connect them to the murder of a journalist that wrote about official corruption. This indicates the current high level of official corruption and the weakness of civil society (von Struensee 2002). Civil society is further undermined and remains powerless to protest the trafficking of women when the largest, most well-funded NGOs are not representing the best interests of the women of Ukraine.

### Conclusion

In 2000, Minister of Internal Affairs Yuriy Kravchenko said, "Ukraine should not be viewed as a source country for women in the sex industry" (Presentation 2000). After a decade of unimpeded trafficking in women, there is little to indicate that the traffickers and pimps see Ukraine as anything other than a source country for women. With the exception of Sweden, the destination countries show few signs of slowing the demand for women for their sex industries.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the trend toward legalization of brothels and pimping will further increase the demand for women. One destination country has already stated its intention to procure the much-in-demand foreign women using work permits. This trend from abolition to regulation of the flow of women is a tribute to the power of the transnational political criminal nexus.

Organized crime networks are a component of this nexus. They engage in the merciless violence of the daily trafficking of women into prostitution. The corrupt officials and police in Ukraine and the destination countries are no less cruel in their collaboration with the criminals by supply authentic documents, ignoring the criminal activity, and assisting in the control of the women. The governments of the destination countries are often open and unapologetic about their demand for foreign women and their intention to legalize the flow of women from sending countries. The vast majority of people in Ukraine oppose the sexual abuse and exploitation of the women and girls of Ukraine. A number of NGOs, charities, and church groups have advocated for policies and laws that will prevent the recruitment and movement of women into sex industries, but their views are less well known and seldom represented in international conferences or forums on trafficking. The transnational political criminal nexus has successfully corrupted civil society as well. The political

component of the nexus has supplanted the grassroots voices of civil society of Ukraine with the voices of the destination countries. Even though no survey indicates that women or people in general support prostitution as work for women, NGOs, like La Strada, lobby for the "rights" of women to go abroad for prostitution.

At this point, the destination countries that create the demand for women in prostitution to a great extent control the policies and debate about how trafficking will be addressed. Sending countries are usually poorer, less powerful, and under the influence of corrupt officials and organized crime groups. They lack the power and/or the political will to insist that destination countries stop their demand for women for prostitution.

The end of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine offered great promise for freedom and democracy. Unfortunately, criminals and corrupt officials have stolen those opportunities from the people, and civil society is yet too underdeveloped to force change from within. The leader of La Strada-Ukraine, Kateryna Levchenko, said that trafficking in women from Ukraine was "our payment for democracy" (Levchenko 2000). But democracy cannot be purchased with criminal activity and corruption that victimizes tens of thousands of women and children. The trafficking of women for prostitution will not be eliminated until both sending and destination countries counter their portion of the political criminal nexus.

### Notes

1. Although trafficking for forced labor exists, more women are trafficked for prostitution than forced labor from Ukraine. This paper reports on research on trafficking for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.
2. I use the term "brothel" as a generic term. The sexual exploitation and abuse of women in prostitution takes place in many venues, including bars, clubs, roadhouses, massage parlors, truck stops, spas, and along streets and highways.
3. The Kiev branch of The Russian Society for the Protection of Women, founded in 1900, was dedicated to helping poor women, especially those in prostitution. They ran a dormitory for women, a free legal clinic, a literacy program, a sewing school, and provided meals at a cafeteria. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life, 1884-1939*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1988, p. 36.
4. This partnership was a joint effort by the International Center at the U.S. National Institute of Justice and the Ukrainian Academy of Law Sciences.
5. According to MiraMed Institute in Moscow, approximately 30 to 50 percent of orphans are recruited into crime, prostitution, and trafficking within a year of leaving the orphanage at age seventeen. Sharon Ryan, "Training for life," *AmCham News*, July-August 2000, p. 32.
6. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was passed in 1979. Article 6 obligates state parties to "take all measures, including legislation, to suppress the trafficking of women and the exploitation of prostitution of women." The Netherlands is a signer of CEDAW and makes regular reports on its compliance.
7. International Organization for Migration, *Information Campaign*.
8. Three hundred and fifty-nine people were surveyed in six regional cities: Zaporizhia (100), Lvov (100), Kharkov (60), Chernigov (59), Kherson (20), and Donetsk (20). Respondents were a cross-section of the population, including employees at private firms and state offices, teachers, accountants, pensioners, students, health care workers, laborers, prisoners, and unemployed.

9. "Statement submitted by the World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations and World Movement of Mothers, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council," Commission on the Status of Women, Forty-second session, 2-13 March 1999. The statement was also signed by Zona International, the National Council on Family Relations, the International Union of Family Organizations, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the International Health Awareness Network, the International Federation on Ageing, World Information Transfer, the International Alliance on Women, and the Global Alliance for Women's Health.
10. In 1999, Sweden introduced a new law that criminalizes the buying of sexual services. <http://www.kvinnofrid.gov.se/regeringen/faktaeng.htm>

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