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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century we are still witnessing slavery in society, it has changed form and is presented to us through human trafficking and prostitution; a human beings body at the mercy of another, like an object, bought and sold in markets around the world.

During the last eight years human trafficking has had a dramatic increase in Iran. According to some estimates there has been a 600 percent increase in prostitution in recent years. The average age of prostitution has dropped to 16 and girls as young as 10 years old are being sold. In many cases which have been reported, government officials are involved in heading prostitution rings and trafficking rings.

Most are shocked to hear of these numbers in a state in which is ruled by Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, exploitation of women, and suppression of women are two sides of a coin. Islamic fundamentalism is based on gender discrimination, thus women are treated as second-class citizens and prostitution and trafficking are the modern forms of slavery.

In the 2003 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report we were stunned to find that Iran was moved up from tier 3 to tier 2, due to lack of information available to the State Department in this regard. A few professors of women's studies, which we had been working with, advised us to start an independent research on this issue. With their guidance and help a few of WFF's researchers, which were fluent in both English and Farsi, began an extensive research by monitoring Iranian media and interviewing Iranians with contacts within the country. During a six-month period we were able to analyze the social circumstances which have led to the growth of trafficking in Iran, its effects on society, and what steps have been taken to counter it. The following is a portion of our analysis and findings.

1. BACKGROUND

In Iran over the past few years, the prostitution and trafficking of women and girls has greatly increased. An unprecedented number of large prostitution and transnational trafficking networks have been uncovered. This increase is particularly striking for a country founded and ruled by religious fundamentalists that made sexual repression, particularly of women, one of their central ruling tenants. Furthermore, many of the criminal networks involve the collaboration of governmental officials and religious clerics.

The ages of the women and children in prostitution vary widely from teen girls to older women. Poverty and unemployment are cited as the cause of adult women turning to prostitution to support their families.¹ Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but according to one estimate, there has been a 635 percent increase in prostitution among high school students.² As prostitution has grown in recent years, the average age of women in prostitution has dropped from 27,³ according to an Iranian official, the average age of prostitution is now 16,⁴ and there are some reports of girls as young as 10 and 11 being found in prostitution.⁵

One factor contributing to the increase in prostitution and trafficking is the number of teen girls who are running away from home. The girls say they are running away to escape abuse and misogynist attitudes towards women and girls at home.⁶ As a result of runaways in Tehran alone, there are an estimated 25,000 street children, most of them girls.⁷ Approximately 70 percent of the girls will never return home.⁸ Unfortunately, in their rush to freedom, the girls find more abuse and exploitation. Ninety percent of girls who run away from home will eventually end up in prostitution.⁹ Most run away girls are raped within the first 24 hours of leaving home and in most cases they are not accepted after that by their parents.¹⁰ Pimps running prostitution rings find vulnerable high school girls and runaways in city parks.¹¹ In 2002, a serial killer raped and killed over 30 women in Tehran; most were believed to have been runaways.¹²

Many girls are victims of internal trafficking, in which girls are recruited from rural areas and taken to large cities, such as Tehran, for prostitution.¹³ Reports indicate that many of the orphans left behind after the Bam earthquake in December of 2003, have been kidnapped and sold by traffickers to wealthy old men in black markets or have been sent abroad, mostly to Arab and Gulf States.¹⁴ There have also been a number of reports of slavery in Iran. Many children and runaways are forced to beg or work in sweatshops.¹⁵ In the western city of Arak, there are enough children aged six to fifteen begging on the streets to obstruct both passenger and car traffic. According to the Society to Protect the Rights of the Child, as a result of the increase in drug use, addicted parents are selling children or forcing them into slavery or prostitution. If the children do not comply, they are beaten, burned, or subjected to other physical punishments.¹⁶

2. Maps and Routes of trafficking from Iran





Many of the vulnerable women and girls are being sold and trafficked to other countries. (See Figure 1: Map of Known Trafficking Cases and Table 1: Known Internal and International Prostitution and Trafficking Rings) The head of Iran's Interpol bureau has stated that the trafficking of human beings "is unprecedented in the past 20 years," and "has become one of the most profitable professions."¹⁷ Thousands of Iranian girls have been sold to Afghani men in the southeastern border province of Sistan Baluchestan.¹⁸ Police have uncovered at least four prostitution and trafficking rings operating from Tehran, which sent girls to France, Britain, Turkey and Arab Gulf states. One network sent girls to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar; another sent girls to Turkey, and one sent the girls to Europe.¹⁹ According to the head of

Tehran province judiciary, prostitution rings select underage girls between 13 and 17 to send to Arab countries in the Gulf.²⁰

In the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan, local police and justice ministry officials report that girls are sold to Pakistani men as sex-slaves. An Iranian newspaper reports that the Pakistani men marry the girls, ranging in age from 12 to 20, and then sell them to brothels called “Kharabat” in Pakistan.^{21 22} One trafficking network was caught contacting poor families around Mashhad and offering to marry their young daughters, some as young as 12. The girls would then be taken through Afghanistan to Pakistan where they were put in brothels.²³ Arab men are also approaching families in poor and destitute Iranian villages, and offering to marry their daughters.

MAP OF KNOWN TRAFFICKING CASES



-  International trafficking route
-  Internal trafficking route
-  Known centers of prostitution rings
-  Capital

The girls are then sent to Karbala and Najaf - holy cities in Iraq - to beg from visiting Iranian worshippers.²⁴ A trafficking network based in Turkey provided women, many of them underage, with fake passports and then transported them to European and Persian Gulf countries, where they were often forced into prostitution.²⁵ In one documented case, a 16-year-old girl who had no visa was smuggled to Turkey, and then sold to a 58-year-old European national for \$20,000.²⁶

Many of these girls are smuggled out of the country by different methods. Footage was made available to Women's Freedom Forum showing how some women are stashed behind the dashboard of cars and smuggled this way to countries such as Dubai, there have also been reports of women being smuggled by being stashed away in boats, for weeks; some are also smuggled using fake IDs and through connections the trafficking rings have with officials.²⁷



Woman stowed away in the dashboard of a car on route to Dubai

The magnitude of trafficking from Iran is indicated by the actions of Arab countries that have begun mass deportation of Iranian women found in prostitution back to Iran. Upon their return, the women often face imprisonment and physical punishment.²⁸

Given the totalitarian theocracy ruling Iran, most organized activities are known to authorities. The exposure of prostitution and trafficking networks in Iran has shown that many clerics and officials are themselves involved in the sexual exploitation, abuse, and trafficking of women and girls to other countries. Women report various forms of sexual exploitation at the hands of officials, such as women must have sex with the judge for him to approve the divorce. Other women who are arrested for prostitution say they must have sex with the arresting officer. The police also recruit young women for sex for the wealthy and powerful clergy.²⁹

Corrupt officials take advantage of the shelters set up to provide services to runaway girls. In Karaj, the former head of a revolutionary tribunal and seven other senior officials were arrested in connection with a prostitution ring that used underage girls who ranged in age from 12 to 18.³⁰ The girls lived at a house, called the Center of Islamic Orientation, which had been set up four years before for runaway girls or those who had trouble with the law.³¹ According to the head of the Department of Justice in Qom Province when a prostitution ring was broken up in Qom, some of the people arrested were from government agencies, including the Department of Justice.³² In another case, a judge was involved in a network that identified girls, aged 13 to 17, to be trafficked abroad.³³

¹ Sohrab Morovati, "Iranian police declare war on prostitution," *Agence France Presse*, May 22, 2002

² ----, "Legislator Warns Of Drug Use, Prostitution Among Street Children" *Colombo Daily News*, 9 August 2001

³ ----, "Iran acknowledges Prostitution," *Associated Press*, July 6, 2000

⁴ ----, *Khorasan Daily*, January 10, 2004

⁵ ----, "Prostitution in Iran on the Rise," *Salam World Wide*, <http://salamworldwide.com/issues11th.html>

⁶ ----, "An Iranian prostitute's electronic plea for help," *Salam World Wide*, <http://salamworldwide.com/issues11th.html>

⁷ ----, "Legislator Warns Of Drug Use, Prostitution Among Street Children" *Colombo Daily News*, 9 August 2001

⁸ Personal communication, January 2002

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- ⁹ -----, "Iran acknowledges Prostitution," *Associated Press*, July 6, 2000
- ¹⁰ "Run away girls raped within first 24 hours," *BBC, Persian broadcast*, July 13, 2005
- ¹¹ Sohrab Morovati, "Iranian police declare war on prostitution," *Agence France Presse*, May 22, 2002 (citing the Farsi daily newspaper, *Entekhab*)
- ¹² Chris de Bellaigue, "Teenage girls who fall prey to Tehran's gangs," *The Independent*, Nov 13, 2000.
- ¹³ -----, "A shocking report on the sale of Iranian girls," *womeniniran.com*, September 2002
- ¹⁴ "Young victims of Iran quake being sold to human traffickers" *Iran Focus News Wire*, September 30, 2004
- ¹⁵ Azam Gorgin and Charles Rechnagel, "Iran: Needy youngsters live on city streets" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 7 December 2000 (citing Iranian daily, *Dowran Emrooz*)
- ¹⁶ Azam Gorgin and Charles Rechnagel, "Iran: Needy youngsters live on city streets" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 7 December 2000 (citing Iranian daily, *Quds*)
- ¹⁷ -----, "Trafficking women in Iran," *Agence France Presse*, 13 October 2000
- ¹⁸ -----, "A shocking report on the sale of Iranian girls," *womeniniran.com*, September 2002
- ¹⁹ Sohrab Morovati, "Iranian police declare war on prostitution," *Agence France Presse*, May 22, 2002
- ²⁰ -----, "Iran uncovers gang smuggling underage prostitutes to Persian Gulf countries," *Agence France Presse*, 6 February 2000 (citing *IRNA*)
- ²¹ -----, "A shocking report on the sale of Iranian girls," *womeniniran.com*, September 2002 (citing *Khandani* monthly)
- ²² -----, "40 Pak men sentenced for trafficking in girls," *The Tribune*, 23 October 2002, (citing *Khorasan Daily*)
- ²³ -----, "53 Iranian tribesmen jailed for selling girls in Pakistan," *ANI*, 28 April 2003
- ²⁴ -----, "A shocking report on the sale of Iranian girls," *womeniniran.com*, September 2002 (citing *Hamshahri*)
- ²⁵ -----, "Trafficking women in Iran," *Agence France Presse*, 13 October 2000 (citing *Jame-Jam Newspaper*)
- ²⁶ -----, "Trafficking women in Iran," *Agence France Presse*, 13 October 2000 (citing *Jame-Jam Newspaper*)
- ²⁷ -----, *Ya-elsarat Magazine*, August 25, 2004
- ²⁸ -----, "Prostitution in Iran on the Rise," *Salam World Wide*, <http://salamworldwide.com/issues11th.html>
- ²⁹ -----, "An Iranian prostitute's electronic plea for help," *Salam World Wide*, <http://salamworldwide.com/issues11th.html>
- ³⁰ -----, "Judge arrested in connection with underage prostitution ring," *Agence France Presse*, 11 February 2001 (citing *Kayhan Newspaper*)
- ³¹ -----, "Iranian judge receives verdict on charges of molesting teenage girls," *Agence France Presse*, 16 July 2001 (citing *Seday-e-Edalat*)
- ³² -----, "50 member gang of corruption and prostitution in Qom," 22 December 2001
- ³³ -----, "Former judge arrested on prostitution-related charges," *IRNA*, 9 February 2001

3. KNOWN INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING RINGS

Date	Origin / Destination	Source	Description
1995			
12/31	Western Iran / Gulf Arab Sheikdoms	AFP	Police dismantled 30 prostitution rings in western Iran and arrested dozens of people including governmental employees; the ring trafficked girls and women to Arab Sheikhs
2000			
01/06	Tehran	AFP	Police close 6 brothels in Tehran; arrest 35
02/06	Tehran / Persian Gulf states	AFP	Gang trafficking girls between 13-17 to Persian Gulf countries for prostitution
02/06	Tehran	AFP	29 brothels closed in Tehran
10/27	Tehran / Persian Gulf states	AFP	Slavery ring trafficked runaway girls to Persian Gulf States; ring leader sold own daughter
2001			
01/11	Tehran	AFP (<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>)	Tehran police shut down 29 brothels in northern districts of the city, arrest 85
05/15	Tehran	AFP	Police dismantle brothel, arrest 25 people
07/16		AFP	A Revolutionary Court judge and several other officials indicted on charges of molesting teenage girls. Judge was arrested in connection with a prostitution ring
07/26	Mashhad	IRNA	500 prostitutes rounded up to stop serial murderer
08/01	Tehran / United Arab Emirates	Reuters	Police arrests member of sex trade ring for trafficking young girls to United Arab Emirates
2002			
05/22	Mashhad	AFP (IRNA)	Police declare war on prostitution; 150 arrested, 44 of them women in Mashhad
05/22	Tehran / France, Britain, Turkey, Arab Gulf states	AFP (<i>Entekhab</i>)	Four prostitution rings, including 30 brothels centered in Tehran were broken up, over 100 arrested; network sent young girls to France, Britain, turkey, and Arab Gulf countries
05/22	Babol and Sari	AFP	Local prostitution rings in Babol and Sari broken up
06/23	Tehran	New York Times (<i>Entekhab</i>)	Estimated 84,000 prostitutes and 250 brothels, some linked to high officials in Tehran
06/26	Qum	National Review Online	Authorities break-up a large prostitution ring

Date	Origin / Destination	Source	Description
09/01	Iran / Turkey, Europe, Arab states	<i>Jam-e-Jam newspaper</i>	Trafficking ring sending women to Turkey, Europe and Arab states
10/13	Shiraz	<i>AFP (Jam-e-Jam)</i>	8 people belonging to trafficking ring arrested
10/20	Northeast Iran	<i>AFP (Entekhab)</i>	Police arrest 243 members of prostitution network
10/20	Tehran	<i>Dawn</i>	an Iranian court has jailed 40 Pakistanis who duped girls into coming to Pakistan, forced to work as prostitute
10/20	Shiraz	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	Police arrested 8 people in a brothel
10/23	Iran / Pakistan	<i>The Tribune</i>	40 Pakistani men sentenced for trafficking girls
12/17	Tehran / Dubai, UAE	<i>IRNA</i>	Tehran police arrest international traffickers of Iranian girls trafficking to Dubai, 12 people arrested 4 women, 8 men
12/17	Isfahan	<i>Jomhuri-ye Islami / IRNA</i>	Police dismantled prostitution ring
12/23	Ahvaz	<i>AFP (Keyhan)</i>	Revolutionary Guards and police shut down 92 centers producing and distributing pornography
2003			
01/21	Tehran (Hakimieh)	<i>Iran Daily</i>	A women who headed two prostitution rings and a drug trafficking ring put on trial; worked with Baluchi traffickers
01/22	Abadan, Khuzestan / Persian Gulf states	<i>Hadeseh</i>	Prostitution ring, with six members, which held parties, filmed, sold, and exported videos and CDs broken up; another ring was busted in October
01/27	Tehran, Shiraz	<i>Hadeseh</i>	Woman head of prostitution rings caught
02/17	Tehran / Dubai, UAE	<i>Keyhan</i>	Women headed ring that trafficked girls from Tehran to Dubai for prostitution in discos or sold them to Emirates' Sheikhs for parties
03/09	Arak	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	Head of prostitution ring turned uncooperative girls over to murderer to be killed
04/06	Tehran	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	Aunt Tuba's, homeless shelter for girls was center for prostitution ring, runaway girls forced into prostitution after they sought shelter
04/07	Tehran / Persian Gulf states	<i>Iran Daily</i>	90 people in 20 brothels arrested, all part of one ring; girls trafficked to Persian Gulf States; largest known international network
04/08	Tehran (Shahran, Resalat and	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	Ring of brothels in Tehran exposed

Human Trafficking in Iran

Date	Origin / Destination	Source	Description
	Shahrak Qods)		
04/08	Rasht & Anzali	<i>Keyhan</i>	6 members of prostitution ring arrested.
04/15	Tehran	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	Woman and two sons arrested for running prostitution ring called "Tiger Shahnaz"
04/16	Shiraz	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	45 men and 33 women arrested in three brothels
04/21	Western Tehran	<i>Keyhan</i>	43 prostitution rings broken up in the past year by the Basij
04/23	Tehran / Abu Dabi / Dubai, UAE	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	Trafficking ring lured girls with promises of becoming singers or actors to Persian Gulf states, including United Arab Emirates; singers from Los Angeles, USA collaborated
04/27	Mashhad / Pakistan	<i>Iran Daily</i>	53 people sentenced to prison for trafficking of girls for prostitution using false marriages to Pakistan
05/03	Tehran	<i>AFP</i>	70 prostitutes, infected with HIV, arrested
05/14	Mashhad (Ahmad Abad, Sajad Blvd., Rahnamayee, Intersection, and Azad Shahr)	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	270 people from 8 brothels and 4 different rings were arrested; Traffickers kidnapped, raped, stole the belongings of girls and women, aged 13 – 30, and imprisoned them in orchards.
05/15	Tehran	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	15 men and women arrested in a prostitution ring run woman from inside prison; Girls were recruited by being told that they would be assisted in leaving the country and entering the business world abroad; Some members were former convicts.
06/10	Eastern Tehran	<i>Jam-e-Jam</i>	Husband and wife caught running a prostitution ring
07/26	Tehran	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	10 men and women arrested in relation to a prostitution ring. "Miss Aunt," the head of the ring, recruited girls at beauty salons.
08/24	Karaj	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	A women brought young runaway girls to her house then forced them into robbery and prostitution
08/30	Karaj	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	25 women and runaway girls in a prostitution ring headed by a doctor were arrested; The doctor performed free abortions, and then forced girls into prostitution by threatening to tell their families about the abortion.
09/17	Bushehr, Shiraz / Dubai, UAE	<i>Iran Liberty</i>	Trafficking route from Borazjan to Dubai via Shiraz uncovered
09/25	/ Dubai, UAE	<i>Iran Liberty</i>	Iranian girls are trafficked to Dolf Hotel and Holiday Hotel, Jamal Circle in Dubai by a trafficking network connected to the Islamic Republic Broadcasting Service

Date	Origin / Destination	Source	Description
09/29	Tehran (Falah District)	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	A 40 year old woman known as "Aunt Setareh" identified girls with no place to live, offered them shelter for a few days, then force them into prostitution to old men in the northern part of Tehran; the girls were also used to sell drugs around the city
09/30	Tehran	<i>The Courier-Mail (Abrar Daily)</i>	Police arrested over 70 prostitutes aged 17 to 24 in three Tehran districts
09/30	Rasht, Anzali	<i>The Courier-Mail (Keyhan)</i>	9 men and women, operating two brothels in Rasht and Anzali arrested
10/1	Kerman	<i>AFP</i>	Police arrest 25 people in local prostitution ring
2004			
4/27	UAE	<i>Radio Farda</i>	Iranian women and young boys and girls are sold in Fajira, UAE daily.
7/20	Karaj	<i>Etemad Daily</i>	Prostitution and trafficking ring revealed to authorities by son of owner in Karaj
10/04	Gulf States	<i>Baztab</i>	Prostitution ring which trafficked young girls to Arab States is identified in Arak
10/24	UAE	<i>Jaam-e-Jam</i>	Trafficking ring to the UAE identified and dismantled.
11/01	Turkey/Germany	<i>Jaam-e-Jam</i>	Travel Agency involved with human trafficking is identified and shut down
11/14	Tabriz	<i>Baztab</i>	Women smuggled from Central Asia and Kazakhstan were arrested in brothels in Tabriz
11/18	Karaj	<i>ISNA</i>	Five brothels in Fardis, Karaj have been dismantled.
12/15	Shahrian - Pakdasht	<i>Hamshahri</i>	59 foreigners involved in human trafficking from Afghanistan to Iran were arrested in Shahrian and Pakdasht. 36 were Bangladesh and 23 Afghan.
2005			
1/25	Dubai	<i>IFNW</i>	A social worker who has spent several months tending to bereaved families said: "Many girls are sold in 'a black market'. Many more are forced to marry men 3 or 4 times their age out of poverty, highly organized criminal gangs, have kidnapped orphaned girls in the area and have been selling them abroad in countries such as Dubai.
3/02	Pakistan, Karachi	<i>IFNW</i>	At least 54 Iranian girls and young women, between the ages of 16 and 25, are sold on the streets of Karachi in Pakistan on a daily basis, according to report outlining the latest statistics.
3/09	Tehran	<i>ISNA</i>	Runaway girls kidnapped and stowed away in a cave in Farahzad Valley
4/11	Neka	<i>IFNW</i>	A number of government officials and security officers were arrested during raids on at least five houses used as brothels in and around the town of Neka, organized child prostitution rings ran the brothels.
4/25	Tehran	<i>Iran Daily</i>	The head of three prostitution rings in Tehran and two other provinces is arrested

4. Achievements

The release of this research was met with a great deal of attention. Some of the achievements we have been able to attain are as followed:

- **Beijing +10 Conference-49th session of the United Nations CSW:** This report was made available to ministers of permanent missions to the United Nation in New York, in charge of CSW. This report further promoted the resolution on trafficking which was adopted by the 49th session.
- WWF was actively involved in the trafficking resolution proposed in the CSW
- **Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to the UN:** This report, along with other material on the status of women was forwarded to, Professor Yakin Ertürk before her trip to Iran, giving her a wider picture of what she may encounter in Iran's society and what issues to follow.
- **U.S. State Department:** This report was made available to some of the researchers, which work as contractors with the State Department on the issue of women and trafficking in efforts to enhance the Iran portion of the State Departments' annual report on international trafficking.
- We have also drawn attention of government entities to the situation of women in Iran and elsewhere by sending them information on this issue on weekly bases.
- **U.S. Congress:** We have met with over a hundred offices in the US Congress and offices of the members of the Congressional Women's Caucus, by making our research on trafficking available to them, we have given them a wider depiction of the situation in Iran helping them in adopting the necessary policies toward Tehran.
- **NGOs:** We have helped raise awareness on human trafficking and prostitution by making the facts we have encountered during this process available on our website. We have received many emails from NGOs in Countries around the world from Asia to the Middle East and Europe, such as Iraq, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which have stated that the information in the report has been useful to their work and some have requested more information in this field.
- **Universities:** We have raised awareness in different universities by holding joint programs with human rights group such as Amnesty International, on college campuses, such as Auroria Campus, George Washington University, and George Mason University. In these programs we have been able to air documentary films depicting the lives of the victims of trafficking and prostitution.
- **The Press:** Women's Freedom Forum has been sited as a source of information on the situation of women in Iran in different reports and articles.

We hope to broaden our research and continue in our efforts to conduct a more complete report within a year.

5. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

5.1 Objective:

To inform international bodies, the US government, and women's groups and NGOs of the plight of the victims of human trafficking in Iran; what is fueling the growth, what its roots are and what actions are being taken in this regard.

In its yearly report the US State Department stated lack of access to Iran prohibits the collection of full and accurate data on the country's trafficking problem and its government's anti-trafficking efforts. Thus, we plan to give a more detailed and accurate report by getting information in this regard from networks within the country and gathering reports from those who have recently left the country or have recently visited Iran. At the same time we will monitor the Iranian media, and analyze laws which may have an effect on the issue, within the country.

5.2 Research Questions

This investigative research project into the internal and international trafficking of women and children for prostitution and slavery in Iran will address two sets of questions; one relating to the criminal aspects of the trafficking, and another relating to the social and political aspects.

Criminal Aspects

- 1) How much internal and international trafficking is there in Iran?
- 2) What are the destination cities for women and children trafficked from Iran?
- 3) From which cities and regions in Iran are women and girls recruited and trafficked?
- 4) Who are the most likely victims of trafficking? Age, ethnicity, education, employment status, history of family violence and conflict, home region
- 5) Who are the traffickers and pimps? Age, sex, ethnicity, nationality, criminal background, affiliation with governmental bodies, home region
- 6) What are the characteristics of the prostitution and trafficking networks: Size, nationalities, cities, regions and countries in which they operate
- 7) How are victims recruited into prostitution and trafficking networks?
- 8) Do police, clergy, governmental officials collaborate with traffickers, pimps, and organized prostitution and trafficking rings? If so to what extent are they involved?

Social and Political Aspects

- 1) How and why did prostitution and trafficking develop so rapidly in Iran in the past eight years?
- 2) Is there a relationship between the increase in social and political unrest, especially among young people in Iran, and the increase in prostitution and trafficking?
- 3) Has an increase in poverty and drug addiction had an effect on the increase of trafficking and prostitution?
- 4) Are those who are entering this field from a specific economical class?

- 5) What solutions to prostitution and trafficking has the Iranian government proposed or implemented?
- 6) Have safe houses and recovery houses been created? If so, what has been their effect and how have they been able to create change in the lives of these women?

5.3 Methods

This investigation of trafficking of women and children in Iran will use qualitative research methods to collect data on victims, perpetrators, and organized trafficking networks in Iran.

1. A questionnaire for interviews will be designed. Most questions will be open ended to gather breadth of information from a variety of sources. Research assistants for the projects will speak and write fluent Farsi and English.
2. Sources of information
 - a) Iranian media sources (newspapers and magazines): National and local Iranian magazines and newspapers will be monitored for stories about prostitution, trafficking and slavery. Research assistants will collect these stories and translate them into English.
 - b) Interviews with knowledgeable sources: 1) sources living in U.S., Canada, and Europe who frequently travel to Iran; 2) victims of trafficking which have escaped and currently reside abroad; 3) sources in the destination countries of Turkey, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and other Middle Eastern countries 4) sources living and working in Iran
 - c) Communication with sources inside Iran through email and chat rooms, some information including video footages and reports will have to be smuggled out of the country, since the government does not such material to leak out of the country.
 - d) Information from Iranian women's groups and human rights activists inside and outside of Iran. Collaboration with experts on human trafficking and women's studies professors in the U.S.

5.4 Analysis of Data

Data collected from Iranian sources will be translated from Farsi into English. Information relevant to research questions will be extracted and compiled. Data collected from Farsi media sources, interviews, and online communication will be compiled in a database. Information from all relevant sources will be used to create maps of trafficking networks. Where possible, descriptive statistics will be compiled. Particular attention will be given to official corruption and collaboration in the trafficking of women and children.

5.5 Reporting of Findings

A report, approximately 100 pages in length, will be produced with the findings from this investigation. The report will include maps and tables that summarize and present findings.

The report will be delivered to the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons for use in evaluating countries on their efforts to combat trafficking of persons. The report will also be given to other human rights monitoring bodies such as the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations Commission on the

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Status of Women, the United States Congress, the Helsinki Committee, the Council of Europe, the Women's Committee of the European Commission, and the European Women's Lobby, and other entities upon their request.

The full report will be placed online on relevant web sites so that governmental offices, researchers, and NGO personnel can easily access it. Hard copies of the report will also be available upon request.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Women's Freedom Forum is an independent organization advocating women's equality, legal and human rights. It promotes women's health, children's rights, and equal job opportunities. Women's Freedom Forum aims to expose gender apartheid, fundamentalism, violence against women, misogyny, human trafficking, child abuse and job discrimination. Women's Freedom Forum is not affiliated with any government agency, political groups or parties. It has begun work on the specific issue of human trafficking in order to provide a unique, cost-effective solution for this issue. This organization is able to extend its work through working closely with women's organizations, independent researchers, reporters and filmmakers around the nation and around the world.

This effort will be managed by one of the directors of Women's Freedom Forum. The team will consist of the principal investigator, project director, research assistants, and a cast of supporting personnel to include investigators, and administrative staff.

7. HOW YOU CAN HELP

Women's Freedom Forum would like to request all interested organizations, agencies and individuals to help us in this project by making funds available to the organization for this project in 2005. Further information can be made available to those interested in aiding us in completing this project.

- Funding will be used to hire researchers and people who will be able to carry out research and interviews inside Iran and countries of destination of human trafficking from Iran.
- Documentary films have been produced inside Iran which we can bring out of the country with your help.
- We plan to produce a documentary of the interviews, living conditions and situation of those trafficked to neighboring countries. A portion of your funding would be used to facilitate this project.

APPENDIX A: MISOGYNOUS VIEWS WRITTEN INTO LAW IN IRAN

- Article 102 indicates, "Women who appear on streets and in public without the prescribed 'Islamic Hejab' will be condemned to 74 strokes of the lash." Khomeini called the long Islamic cloak, or chador, that covers all but the woman's face "the flag of the revolution." (Persian Mirrors: The Elusive Face of Iran, P. 134)
- The regime defines the subservient role of women in Article 105 of the Civil Code: "In the relationship between a man and a woman, the man is responsible as head of the family." The Council of Guardians has decreed, "A woman cannot leave her home without her husband's permission, even to attend her father's funeral."
- Article 1117 of the Civil Code states that the husband may ban his wife from any technical profession that conflicts with family life or her character (Abrar Daily, February 8, 1998).
- Article 1133 of the Civil Code states, "A man can divorce his wife whenever he so chooses and does not have to give her advance notice."
- Laws prohibit women from the presidency, judgeships, and certain educational fields, and restrict their inheritance rights. According to Iran's constitution, only men are allowed to run for president. In 1997, a top election official, Ayatollah Emami Kashani, said, "Only recognized statesmen who are committed to Iran's Islamic government and *velayat-e faqih* will be allowed to run in presidential elections." (Associated Press, April 7, 1997)
- In July 1998, Judiciary Chief Yazdi, member of The Guardian Council, in his Friday prayer sermon said, "The women judges I mentioned hold positions in the judiciary, they receive salaries, they attend trials, they provide counsel, but they do not preside over trials or issue verdicts." (Tehran Radio, July 31, 98)
- January 9, 2004, Ayatollah Haeri stated in his Friday prayer sermon in Shiraz: "A woman that comes into public dressed inappropriately partially feeds the hunger of men, and then when someone sexually harasses them they state that the country is not safe! If a woman controls herself and doesn't attract men to her self no one will harass her."

Etemad Daily, February 04, 2005- A Tehran court has sentenced a couple to death by stoning and hanging.

Iran's Supreme Court has reportedly upheld the verdicts and has confirmed that the woman only identified by her first name Massoumeh will be stoned to death and her husband identified by his first name Ismaeil will be hanged to death.

SINA News Agency January 17, 2005- TEHRAN- Eighty-nine percent of unemployed women in Iran are highly educated, with many in universities, according to a senior government expert.

"About 88.7 percent of unemployed women in Iranian cities and 59.4 percent of unemployed women in rural areas are highly educated", Ladan Nowrouzi said, in an interview with a state-run news agency, SINA.

Referring to the 2002 data, she said, "The unemployment rate among women is 1.5 times more than among men. Among 15 to 24-year-olds the rate is 40 percent higher."

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"The unemployment rate is much higher among women with higher degrees of education", she said, adding, "Despite more women receiving graduate degrees, unemployment among them has not changed."

She said one of the main reasons for unemployment among educated women was that women are not allowed into many prominent positions and sectors of society. Among the root causes was the government's unwillingness to offer women more social opportunities, especially in influential professions, she said.

Shargh Daily, December 30, 2004- Members of Iran's Majlis have urgently passed a plan which will create a marriage committee. One of the responsibilities of this committee will be to set the maximum marriage-portion of girls by their district. In other words, the marriage-portion of girls will differ in different regions of the country, which only means that women will be looked upon as objects to be sold and bought. The members of Majlis have stated that their objective is to make marriage easier for the youth, but if this is so why is there a difference between marriage-portion for girls in different areas. Setting different marriage-portions for different areas will create somewhat of a social contempt toward women in certain areas. Secondly, the human dignity of people, men and women is not something that we can place a price on. In a time where many countries like India are trying to create equality within their society, what is the message of a plan signed by members of the Majlis which creates social classes in society? What is surprising is that 10 female members of the Majlis have signed this plan.

Agence France Presse, October 30, 2004- TEHRAN – An Iranian woman lawmaker is backing the removal of the concept of gender equality from a state development plan in order to prevent the "bullying" of men, the state news agency IRNA reported on Saturday.

"Bringing up the issue of gender justice is a case of bullying men," the female deputy, Eshrat Shayeghi told the agency.

She said she was supporting a decision by the conservative-dominated parliament to delete a phrase in the 'Fourth Five-Year Development Plan' (2005-2010), which aimed at considering equal training and employment opportunities for women as men.

"If men are in the habit of beating, women are guilty of talking back," Shayeghi said.

"If the gender justice is brought up, men can object to payment of the household expenses (nafagheh) -- given under Islamic law to housewives -- as a sort of abuse and violence against men."

Iran Mania, September 28, 2004- LONDON -- The Iranian Parliament has put imposition of limitations concerning the admission of girl students in universities in certain fields on its agenda, Iran Emrooz reported.

According to Iran Emrooz Internet site the conservative-dominated parliament justified the decision by saying that certain majors are not suitable for women due to their physical characteristics.

Veterinary is one of the fields, which according to the defenders of the plan is more fitting for men rather than women.

The New York Times, September 19, 2004- TEHRAN -- After the legislative session began in June, the 290-member Parliament, including all 12 of the women, abruptly rejected proposals to expand the inheritance right of Iranian women and to adopt the United Nations convention that

bans discrimination against women. They also backed away from previous efforts to make "gender equality" a goal of the country's next four-year development plan.

Instead, the new Parliament has called for placing more restrictions on women's attire and on their social freedoms.

In recent months newspapers have reported that scores of women have been arrested in Tehran, the capital, and around the country because they were wearing what the authorities considered to be un-Islamic dress. Members of Parliament have called for segregating men and women at universities and for other limits on women's activities. Hard-liners have held protests to call for a crackdown on freedoms for women and have contended that women ridicule religious sanctities by violating the dress code.

Agence France Presse, January 6, 2004- TEHRAN - Deputies in Iran's conservative-run parliament have begun preparing designs for what will be a new national costume aimed at stemming the encroachment of Western fashion, a top MP said Thursday.

Emad Afroogh, head of the Majlis cultural commission, said MPs have been "meeting with designers to come up with an interesting variety of affordable, nationally inspired designs that will also respond to modern needs."

He said the commission hoped to eventually incorporate the designs into a new bill offering guidelines on dress that "redefine Iranian identity while respecting religious and cultural red lines."

The effort to stipulate what to wear comes several months after the Islamic republic's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned of a "cultural invasion" and the dangers of imitating foreigners.

Police have also been cracking down on skimpy dressers, warning women not to dress like "models".

In Iran, women are obliged to cover their heads and body shape, while men are also expected to show off as little skin as necessary. But some women, especially those in more wealthy urban environments, regularly test the limits by sporting shorter, tighter and brighter coats, three-quarter length trousers and flimsy headscarves.

Baztab, September 8, 2003- Vice President of the Social Commission of the Iranian Parliament stated: CEDAW is in contradiction with Sharia and our laws. In an interview with IRNA the official news agency of Iran Seyyed Mostafa Seyyed Hashemi stated one of the main problems with CEDAW is the fact that women and men are viewed as equals and they have not differentiated between men and women in society. He also stated that in Islam we do not have the issue of equality, we have the issue of justice, and it has never been stated that all humans are equal and men and women are not equal, but each has its special place in society.

Shargh Daily, August 16, 2004- Sahar Namazi Khah: the percentage of employed women in Iran is less than countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Tunisia, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, and Lebanon. Iran is in the same tier as Syria, Algeria, and Yemen when it comes to the employment of women.

WOMEN SECOND CLASS CITIZENS

Quotes from within the Iranian regime

“Eshrat Shayegh, female representative from Tabriz province: “If ten street women are executed we won’t have any street women anymore...” with emphasis on the fact that a woman is worthless without a family, she added, “In some cultures they do not accept women, our society respects women and it’s the women who do not believe in themselves.”—November 20, 2004, Aftab Yazd Daily

“Bringing up the issue of gender justice is a case of bullying men” the female deputy, Eshrat Shayegh told the AFP. “If men are in the habit of beating, women are guilty of talking back” Shayegh said. “If the gender justice is brought up, men can object to payment of the household expenses—given under Islamic law to housewives – as a sort of abuse and violence against men.” – October 30, 2004, AFP

“Polygamy eventually serves the interests of women” Ms. Fatimeh Aliya was quoted as saying in newspaper reports. “No woman can emotionally accept another woman in her life, but if she puts herself in the shoes of a woman who needs support then she can accept the idea.” – September 19, 2004, the New York Times

Zahra Shojaii, Khatami’s deputy on women’s affairs: stoning is necessary to “uphold the sanctity of family” – July 6, 2002, Ressalat Daily. “Violence against women in our society is very low and negligible”—November 12, 1997, Hamshahri Daily

In an attempt to justify the anti-human stoning to death decrees, Massoumeh Ebtekar, Khatami’s advisor, reasoned, “One ought to take into consideration the psychological and legal issues in society. If the prevailing family laws are violated, it would lead to high complicated and grave consequences in the entire society.” – October 18, 1997, Die Tageszeitung

Former Judiciary Chief Mohammad Yazdi, who is now a member of the Guardian Council, says: “In Islam, as we understand and practice it, women are banned from two things: serving as judges and governing. No matter how knowledgeable, wise, virtuous and competent they may be, women do not have the right to rule... If humans were not obliged to kneel before God only, women should have knelt before their husbands.”

Former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said: The difference in stature, vitality, voice, development, muscular quality and physical strength of men and women shows that men are stronger and more capable in all fields... Men’s brains are larger... These differences affect the delegation of responsibilities, duties and rights.”

Morteza Motahhari, an ideologue of the fundamentalist regime, contends, “All women are fond of being supervised... Men’s spiritual superiority over women was designed by Mother Nature. No matter how much a woman wants to fight this reality, her efforts will prove futile. Women must accept the reality that because of their greater sensitivity, they need men to control their lives.” – ‘The Order of Women’s Rights in Islam’ by Morteza Motahhari.

Morteza Motahhari: A woman’s self esteem derives from the man, and so she does anything to gain his esteem. Her soul and flesh, feelings, even her basic identity, belong to and are identified with him. Man replaces God for a woman.—‘The Order of Women’s Rights in Islam’ by Morteza Motahhari.

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Motahhari: “Women and men are equal in their human essence, but they are two different forms of humans, with two different sets of attributes and two different psyches... Such differences are not a consequence of geographic, historic, or social factors, but are enshrined in the essence of Creation. There is a purpose to these natural differences, and any practice which contradicts nature and man’s natural disposition will bring about undesirable consequences.”

Ahmad Azari Qomi who has received several key judicial appointments: “In Islam, the marriage of a virgin girl is not allowed without the permission of the father and the consent of the girl. Both must agree, but at the times the rule of the divine leadership supersedes that of the father and girl on the issue of marriage and *vali-e-faghigh* can enforce his views contrary to the opinion of the father and the girl.”

APPENDIX B: RESOLUTION AND STATEMENTS BY THE UNITED NATIONS

ELIMINATING DEMAND FOR TRAFFICKED WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR ALL FORMS OF EXPLOITATION

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Resolution

March 11, 2005

The Commission on the Status of Women,

PP1 Reaffirming the provisions pertaining to all forms of trafficking of women and girls contained in the outcome documents of relevant international conferences and summits, in particular the strategic objective on the issue of trafficking contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

PP2 Recalling the full range of previous resolutions on the problem of trafficking in women and girls adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, in particular their reaffirmation of the principles set forth in the relevant human rights instruments and declarations, and the resolve expressed by heads of government in the Millennium Declaration to intensify efforts to fight transnational organized crime in all its dimensions, including trafficking in human beings;

PP3 Recalling the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and ILO Conventions 29 and 182;

PP4 Emphasizing that the fight against trafficking in women and girls for all forms of exploitation requires a comprehensive approach that addresses all factors and root causes that foster demand and make women and girls vulnerable to trafficking, as well as the protection and rehabilitation of victims;

PP5 Acknowledging the fact that the majority of trafficked persons are women and girls, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

PP6 Concerned about the increasing occurrence of trafficking for all forms of exploitation, especially for commercial sexual exploitation, which overwhelmingly affects women and girls;

PP7 Concerned that multiple forms of discrimination and conditions of disadvantage contribute to the vulnerability to trafficking of women and girls, and that indigenous, refugee, internally displaced and migrant women and girls may be particularly at risk;

PP8 Bearing in mind that all states have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish perpetrators of trafficking in persons and to provide protection to the victims, and that not doing so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

PP9 Concerned that the exploitation of women in international prostitution and trafficking networks has become one of the a major focuses of transnational organized crime;

PP10 Convinced that eliminating demand for trafficked women and girls for all forms of exploitation, including for sexual exploitation, is a key element to combating trafficking;

PP11 Welcoming the appointment of the special rapporteur on the Commission on Human Rights on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and her intention to devote special attention in her annual report to thematic issues, including inter alia, the root causes of trafficking and the discouragement of the demand that fosters trafficking for the purposes of all forms of exploitation.

OP1 Calls upon governments to:

- a) Take all appropriate measures to eliminate demand for trafficked women and girls for all forms of exploitation;
- b) Take appropriate measures to address the root factors, including poverty and gender inequality, as well as external factors that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriage and forced labor, in order to eliminate such trafficking, including by strengthening existing legislation with a view to providing better protection for the rights of women and girls and to punishing perpetrators, through both criminal and civil measures;
- c) Criminalize trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, in all its forms and to condemn and penalize traffickers and intermediaries, while ensuring protection and assistance to the victims of trafficking, with full respect for their human rights;
- d) Adopt or strengthen and enforce legislative or other measures, such as educational, social and cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to deter exploiters and eliminate the demand that fosters trafficking of women and girls for all forms of exploitation;
- e) Conclude bilateral, sub regional, regional and international agreements to address the problem of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, including mutual assistance treaties, agreements and memoranda of understanding to enhance law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and specific measures aimed at reducing demand, as appropriate to complement the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

OP2 Calls upon governments and encourages civil society to:

- a) Take appropriate measures to raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons, particularly in women and girls, including to address the demand side of the problem, and to publicize the laws, regulations and penalties relating to this issue, and to emphasize that trafficking is a crime, in order to eliminate the demand for trafficked women and girls, including by sex tourists;
- b) Implement educational programs, including at the local level, to raise awareness of the negative consequences of trafficking in women and girls, including its links to commercial sexual exploitation, organized crime, and harmful public health effects,

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such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, and of the rights and needs of trafficked women and girls;

- c) Undertake research on best practices, methods and strategies, information and mass media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls, in particular to eliminate demand;

OP3 Encourages governments to intensify collaboration with non-governmental organizations to develop and implement comprehensive programs, including to provide shelter and help lines to victims or potential victims of trafficking and for effective counseling, training and social and economic reintegration into society of victims;

OP4 Encourages the business sector, in particular the tourism industry and Internet providers, to develop or adhere to codes of conduct with a view to preventing trafficking in persons and protecting the victims of such traffic, especially for commercial sexual exploitation, and promoting their rights, dignity and security, including through collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

**UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE
UNITED NATIONS WOMEN'S RIGHTS EXPERT
CONCLUDES VISIT TO IRAN**

February 8, 2005

Prof. Yakin Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights issued the following statement at the end of her official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran (29 January to 6 February 2005):

I would like to present my preliminary observations on the situation of violence against women in Iran within the context of the 1993 UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women which defines violence in the family, in the community and that perpetrated or condoned by the State.

In the family, women face psychological, sexual and physical violence. The existing laws and practice fall short of providing the necessary protection for victims of domestic violence. Time-consuming and costly judicial procedures and stigmatization often discourage women from pursuing their rights. Difficulties in obtaining divorce and the custody of the children add to the hardships of women. These situations have serious consequences for women's mental and physical health. For example, women in Ilam are taking their own lives as the ultimate means of escape, or in some cases women have killed their abusive husbands or relatives.

Women also face violence in the community. There are reports of trafficking of Iranian women and girls particularly to the Gulf countries. In this context, I welcome the anti-trafficking law and hope it will provide effective protection for the rights of the victims.

I am also concerned that victims of rape face numerous obstacles in accessing justice. Due to the rules of evidence if rape cannot be proven a woman could be punished for illegitimate relations. On the other hand a woman who may kill a rapist in self-defense could face the death sentence.

Concerning violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, I am seriously concerned at arbitrary arrests, torture and ill treatment, and prolonged solitary confinement which have been used in violation of Iran's Constitution and international law. Furthermore, detainees are reportedly held in incommunicado detention throughout the investigative phase without access to legal counsel, including during interrogations and when making confessions.

I am troubled by the widespread practice of arrest for political opinion, including female human rights defenders, and for "moral offences" reportedly carried out by quasi-official forces and bodies operating in parallel to official institutions. I am also concerned that in the majority of cases I reviewed the safeguards for fair trial and the principle of proportionality in the punishment of certain crimes were not observed.

In conclusion, discriminatory laws and malfunction in the administration of justice result in impunity for perpetrators and perpetuate discrimination and violence against women.

Human Trafficking in Iran

In view of my observations, I would like to make the following initial recommendations to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- Prioritize law reform to amend all discriminatory laws in conformity with the Constitution and international human rights instruments (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor) to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party;
- Ensure transparency, including through the provision of dates and procedure, for the implementation of measures for judicial reform which are currently being discussed to improve administration of justice for women;
- Work towards alternative forms of punishment orientated towards prevention and rehabilitation rather than revenge and in this context abolish the death penalty;
- Until then, following credible reports of violations of the right to fair trial and discrimination against women, carefully review the evidence against all detainees sentenced to death;
- Adopt effective measures to ensure observance of safeguards to protect the rights of detainees, all allegations of torture should be duly investigated, the culprits punished and measures taken to prevent any recurrence of such acts;
- Adopt a national action plan for promotion and protection of human rights with special emphasis on the elimination of violence against women;
- Conduct awareness raising campaigns, including through written and visual media, to promote positive images of women and educate the population about human rights and elimination of violence against women;
- Engage in "cultural negotiation" at all levels of society to bring out the positive elements in culture and tradition and discourage the negative ones;
- Promote participation of women in society and increase number of women in decision-making positions in all sectors.

I wish to thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for facilitating my visit. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the human rights organizations, individuals and victims of violence for valuable information provided. Finally, I would like to thank the UN country team for their support to the visit.

I will introduce an oral presentation of my findings to the sixty-first session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 2005, and a report of my findings and recommendations to the sixty-second session in 2006.

I would like to conclude my statement with a quotation from the Takvir Sura (verses 8-9) "[In the day of the judgment] it will be asked from the girls who were buried alive: "For what sin were you murdered."

APPENDIX C: REPORTS ON TRAFFICKING IN IRAN BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT-2005

IRAN (TIER 2)

Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. Women and girls are trafficked to Pakistan, Turkey, and Europe for sexual exploitation. Boys from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are trafficked through Iran to Gulf States, where they are ultimately forced to work as camel jockeys, beggars, or laborers.

Afghan women and girls are trafficked to Iran for sexual exploitation, and for sexual and labor exploitation in the context of forced marriage. Internal trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation and children for forced labor also takes place. The internal trafficking of women and children is fueled by an increasing number of vulnerable groups, such as runaway women, street children, and drug addicts.

The U.S. Department of State's lack of access to Iran prohibits the collection of full and accurate data on the country's trafficking problem and its government's anti-trafficking efforts. As best as can be determined from the limited information available, the Government of Iran does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. In 2004, Iran conducted a study on trafficking of women from border provinces to the Persian Gulf, passed a law against human trafficking, and signed separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Afghanistan, Turkey, IOM, and ILO. The government should develop and implement a comprehensive anti-trafficking national plan of action and appoint a national coordinator to oversee its overall anti-trafficking efforts. Iran should also take steps to enhance protection measures for trafficking victims, including ensuring that those who are punished for trafficking are not victims.

Prosecution

Iran made progress in its prosecution efforts during the reporting period. It passed a law against human trafficking. This new law, in conjunction with the prohibition against the trafficking of children, is expected to enhance Iran's overall abilities to combat most forms of human trafficking. In addition, Iran arrested and convicted a woman and her accomplice husband for trafficking young girls and women to work in a brothel in the northern city of Qazvin. It also arrested and convicted 20 members of a human trafficking ring in the city of Bileh Savar. The Iranian Border Force (IBF) arrested over 253 Pakistanis smuggled into Iran, some of them likely trafficking victims. This action showed a lack of adequate screening of illegal immigrants to identify trafficking victims.

Protection

Iran's protection measures for trafficking victims are weak. It is unclear whether the government distinguishes trafficking victims to provide them protection. The State Welfare Organization for Social Affairs reportedly assists victims and those at risk of trafficking through mobile and fixed social emergency centers. These centers provide counseling, legal services, and health care. The State Welfare Organization also manages temporary shelters for "troubled women" and facilities for young runaway girls. These facilities are available to trafficking victims as well.

Prevention

During the reporting period, Iran increased its anti-trafficking prevention efforts. It improved its monitoring of the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan and held a conference on human trafficking.

Iran also signed separate MOUs with IOM and ILO to enhance the capacity of its institutions and, among other things, to combat trafficking. Furthermore, Iran is reportedly planning to launch, in collaboration with IOM, public awareness campaigns against the trafficking of women and girls.

The State Welfare Organization allocates modest funds to support 41 countrywide centers for street children that deliver care to thousands of children at risk for exploitation

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT-2004

IRAN (TIER 2)

Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. Women and girls are trafficked to Pakistan, Turkey, and France for sexual exploitation. Boys from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are trafficked through Iran to the Gulf States where they are forced to work as camel jockeys, beggars, or laborers. Afghan women and girls are trafficked to Iran for sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Internal trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation and children for forced labor also takes place. The internal trafficking of women and children is fueled by an increasing number of vulnerable groups, such as runaway women, street children and drug addicts.

The Government of Iran does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Iran is included in the report for the first time due to more and specific information indicating that it is a source, transit, and destination country for a significant number of victims of severe forms of trafficking. Iran must take steps to ensure that those who are punished for trafficking are not victims, and that victims are provided appropriate shelter. The government should also train police in the identification and protection of victims. It should also support public awareness campaigns in the fight against trafficking.

Prosecution

Iran's anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts remain strong. Iranian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking of adults, although the sale and trafficking of children is a criminal offense under Iran's Penal Code. Other statutes are also used to prosecute traffickers. In April, an Iranian court sentenced 27 people to prison terms ranging from 14 months to 10 years for the trafficking of young girls for sexual exploitation to the United Arab Emirates. In June 53 Afghan refugee tribesmen were sentenced to a total of 281 years in prison, 222 lashes, and fines for luring girls with marriage offers and then trafficking them to Pakistan for forced prostitution.

In August, approximately 400 female police officers graduated, the first since the Islamic Revolution. The female police officers work specifically on crimes against women, including trafficking and sexual exploitation cases.

Protection

Prostitution is strictly illegal in Iran and subject to harsh punishments. It is unclear if the government makes efforts to distinguish trafficking victims from others engaged in prostitution. The State Welfare Organization for Social Affairs assists victims and those at risk of trafficking through five mobile and 44 fixed social emergency centers. These centers provide counseling, legal services, and health care. The State Welfare Organization also manages 14 temporary shelters for "troubled women" and 28 facilities for young runaway girls. These facilities are available to trafficking victims.

Prevention

The State Welfare Organization allocates modest funds to support 41 countrywide centers for street children that deliver care to approximately 10,000 children at risk for exploitation. It is estimated that there are approximately 1.2 million street children in Iran as well as 420,000 child laborers under the age of 15.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT-2003

IRAN

Without a diplomatic presence in Iran, the Department has found it difficult to corroborate information.

Scope and Magnitude

Press reports and reporting from destination countries indicate that Iran is a country of origin and transit for women and girls trafficked to the Gulf States, Turkey, France, Britain, and Pakistan for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Boys are trafficked through Iran to the United Arab Emirates where some are forced to work as camel jockeys.

Internal trafficking of women and girls for purposes of sexual exploitation occurs, fueled by the increasing number of runaways. Many of these victims are lured with the promise of good jobs, rich husbands, or exciting lives abroad.

Government Efforts

The Government of Iran is arresting, investigating, and prosecuting a significant number of cases involving prostitution and/or trafficking and working with Pakistan to increase border patrols to prevent cross-border trafficking of drugs and persons. Iranian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking; however, there are other statutes that are used to prosecute traffickers, including prohibiting procurement for the purpose of fornication. Over 7 months in 2002, police closed down 70 brothels. During the year, the government arrested hundreds of people for involvement in "corruption networks" related to prostitution where young girls were trafficked abroad. No consolidated information on the total number of convictions is available, but there are cases where facilitators of prostitution rings have received sentences from 3 years to death. There have been unconfirmed reports of victims being arrested and jailed, as well as a past case in which a girl was arrested and later referred to a rehabilitation center. There were also reports in November that 20 girls were rescued with cooperation from the Pakistani government from a brothel in Pakistan. Although there are not any shelters or rehabilitation centers specifically for victims of trafficking, there are homes and shelters for street children (boys) and a shelter for troubled girls. According to press reports, the shelter for boys, called the "Green House," is a subsidiary body of the Tehran Municipality's Social Affairs Department where 4,271 boys were looked after and returned to their families or either assigned to welfare homes. News articles claim the "Reyhaneh House" for girls provides various services and assistance, including shelter, to runaway girls or other girls in need. There are 20 social workers at the shelter that provide counseling and assistance. Press reports say that out of the 450 girls who found shelter at the center, at least 149 girls were treated and returned to their families. It is impossible to determine if all victims are treated this way or if victims are punished.

Areas for Improvement

The Government needs to ensure that those who are being punished for trafficking are not the victims and are sheltered appropriately. More public awareness campaigns and attention need to be focused on the issue of trafficking, especially as it relates to the problem of runaways, as well as the training of police officers in dealing with victims of trafficking. Iran needs to curb corruption among law enforcement officials and judges and better monitor its borders.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT-2002

Iran (Tier 3)

Iran is a country of origin and transit for trafficked persons. Iranian women and girls have been trafficked to the Gulf States and Turkey for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Boys are trafficked through Iran to the United Arab Emirates where they are forced to work as camel jockeys. Internal trafficking of women and girls for purposes of sexual exploitation also occurs.

The Government of Iran does not fully comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. Iranian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking; however, there are other statutes that could be used to prosecute traffickers. There reportedly were three trials during the year related to trafficking. No information is available, however, regarding details of the trials or their outcomes. The Government of Iran has cooperated with Pakistani authorities on a camel jockey case by extraditing adults wanted for trafficking. The Penal Code includes provisions that mandate the stoning of women and men convicted of adultery. It is difficult for women who are victims of male traffickers to obtain legal redress since a woman's testimony in court is worth only half that of a man's, making it difficult for a woman to prove a case against a male defendant. The government has not undertaken any measures to protect victims of trafficking. Victims are often jailed, flogged, and sometimes stoned to death for adultery. Regarding prevention, the government supports keeping youth in school, but it has not supported public awareness campaigns.

APPENDIX D: HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN IRAN COVERED BY THE MEDIA

Girls in Iran being sold in Pakistan on daily basis

Iran Focus

March 2, 2005

Tehran – At least 54 Iranian girls and young women, between the ages of 16 and 25, are sold on the streets of Karachi in Pakistan on a daily basis, according to report outlining the latest statistics.

The report also revealed that there are at present at least 300,000 runaway girls in Iran, adding that the estimated number of women under the absolute poverty line was more than eight million.

A senior women's affairs analyst today revealed the findings speaking to a state-run news agency.

"According to an investigation by analysts, women comprise of only two percent of the country's administration force", Mahboubeh Moghadam said.

"Every day 54 Iranian girls between 16 to 25 years of age are bought and sold in Karachi, and the root of this crisis is the government policy which has resulted in poverty and the deprival of rights for the majority of people in society", she added.

Professor Donna M. Hughes, a Women's Studies expert at the University of Rhode Island in the United States, recently shed some light on the issue of human trafficking.

"Slave traders take advantage of any opportunity in which women and children are vulnerable", she said.

"Popular destinations for victims of the slave trade are the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf. According to the head of the Tehran province judiciary, traffickers target girls between 13 and 17, although there are reports of some girls as young as 8 and 10, to send to Arab countries. One ring was discovered after an 18-year-old girl escaped from a basement where a group of girls were held before being sent to Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The number of Iranian women and girls who are deported from Persian Gulf countries indicates the magnitude of the trade".

Hughes added, "Police have uncovered a number of prostitution and slavery rings operating from Tehran that have sold girls to France, Britain and Turkey as well. One network based in Turkey bought smuggled Iranian women and girls, gave them fake passports, and transported them to European and Persian Gulf countries. In one case, a 16-year-old girl was smuggled to Turkey, and then sold to a 58-year-old European national for \$20,000".

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Moghadam said that the report's findings indicated that organized gangs were smuggling girls and young women to the southern Gulf States by air and hinted that such a task was very difficult to carry out without some sort of government green-light.

"The number of runaway girls in the country is at least 300,000. Nearly 86 percent of girls who runaway from home for the first time end up being sexually abused", she added.

Highlighting the fact that more than eight million women are living in poverty, Moghadam said, "The number of youths who are suffering from psychological problems in Iran currently stands between eight to ten million people, the majority of whom are girls".

Moghadam noted that Iran currently has the highest suicide rate in the world, adding, "Every year seven thousand people commit suicide, the majority of whom are women".

Moghadam also criticized the government's treatment of women, adding that basic freedoms such as the right to choose what to wear and the right to take part in arts and sporting activities were non-existent.

<http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1616>

Sex Slave Jihad

By Donna M. Hughes

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A measure of Islamic fundamentalists' success in controlling society is the depth and totality with which they suppress the freedom and rights of women. In Iran for 25 years, the ruling mullahs have enforced humiliating and sadistic rules and punishments on women and girls, enslaving them in a gender apartheid system of segregation, forced veiling, second-class status, lashing, and stoning to death.

Joining a global trend, the fundamentalists have added another way to dehumanize women and girls: buying and selling them for prostitution. Exact numbers of victims are impossible to obtain, but according to an official source in Tehran, there has been a 635 percent increase in the number of teenage girls in prostitution. The magnitude of this statistic conveys how rapidly this form of abuse has grown. In Tehran, there are an estimated 84,000 women and girls in prostitution, many of them are on the streets, others are in the 250 brothels that reportedly operate in the city. The trade is also international: thousands of Iranian women and girls have been sold into sexual slavery abroad.

The head of Iran's Interpol bureau believes that the sex slave trade is one of the most profitable activities in Iran today. This criminal trade is not conducted outside the knowledge and participation of the ruling fundamentalists. Government officials themselves are involved in buying, selling, and sexually abusing women and girls.

Many of the girls come from impoverished rural areas. Drug addiction is epidemic throughout Iran, and some addicted parents sell their children to support their habits. High unemployment 28 percent for youth 15-29 years of age and 43 percent for women 15-20 years of age is a serious factor in driving restless youth to accept risky offers for work. Slave traders take advantage of any opportunity in which women and children are vulnerable. For example, following the recent earthquake in Bam, orphaned girls have been kidnapped and taken to a known slave market in Tehran where Iranian and foreign traders meet.

Popular destinations for victims of the slave trade are the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf. According to the head of the Tehran province judiciary, traffickers target girls between 13 and 17, although there are reports of some girls as young as 8 and 10, to send to Arab countries. One ring was discovered after an 18 year-old girl escaped from a basement where a group of girls were held before being sent to Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The number of Iranian women and girls who are deported from Persian Gulf countries indicates the magnitude of the trade. Upon their return to Iran, the Islamic fundamentalists blame the victims, and often physically punish and imprison them. The women are examined to determine if they have engaged in "immoral activity." Based on the findings, officials can ban them from leaving the country again.

Police have uncovered a number of prostitution and slavery rings operating from Tehran that have sold girls to France, Britain, Turkey as well. One network based in Turkey bought smuggled Iranian women and girls, gave them fake passports, and transported them to European

and Persian Gulf countries. In one case, a 16-year-old girl was smuggled to Turkey, and then sold to a 58-year-old European national for \$20,000.

In the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan, local police report that girls are being sold to Pakistani men as sex-slaves. The Pakistani men marry the girls, ranging in age from 12 to 20, and then sell them to brothels called "Kharabat" in Pakistan. One network was caught contacting poor families around Mashad and offering to marry girls. The girls were then taken through Afghanistan to Pakistan where they were sold to brothels.

In the southeastern border province of Sistan Baluchestan, thousands of Iranian girls reportedly have been sold to Afghani men. Their final destinations are unknown.

One factor contributing to the increase in prostitution and the sex slave trade is the number of teen girls who are running away from home. The girls are rebelling against fundamentalist imposed restrictions on their freedom, domestic abuse, and parental drug addictions. Unfortunately, in their flight to freedom, the girls find more abuse and exploitation. Ninety percent of girls who run away from home will end up in prostitution. As a result of runaways, in Tehran alone there are an estimated 25,000 street children, most of them girls. Pimps prey upon street children, runaways, and vulnerable high school girls in city parks. In one case, a woman was discovered selling Iranian girls to men in Persian Gulf countries; for four years, she had hunted down runaway girls and sold them. She even sold her own daughter for US\$11,000.

Given the totalitarian rule in Iran, most organized activities are known to the authorities. The exposure of sex slave networks in Iran has shown that many mullahs and officials are involved in the sexual exploitation and trade of women and girls. Women report that in order to have a judge approve a divorce they have to have sex with him. Women who are arrested for prostitution say they must have sex with the arresting officer. There are reports of police locating young women for sex for the wealthy and powerful mullahs.

In cities, shelters have been set-up to provide assistance for runaways. Officials who run these shelters are often corrupt; they run prostitution rings using the girls from the shelter. For example in Karaj, the former head of a Revolutionary Tribunal and seven other senior officials were arrested in connection with a prostitution ring that used 12 to 18 year old girls from a shelter called the Center of Islamic Orientation.

Other instances of corruption abound. There was a judge in Karaj who was involved in a network that identified young girls to be sold abroad. And in Qom, the center for religious training in Iran, when a prostitution ring was broken up, some of the people arrested were from government agencies, including the Department of Justice.

The ruling fundamentalists have differing opinions on their official position on the sex trade: deny and hide it or recognize and accommodate it. In 2002, a BBC journalist was deported for taking photographs of prostitutes. Officials told her: "We are deporting you ... because you have taken pictures of prostitutes. This is not a true reflection of life in our Islamic Republic. We don't have prostitutes." Yet, earlier the same year, officials of the Social Department of the Interior Ministry suggested legalizing prostitution as a way to manage it and control the spread of HIV. They proposed setting-up brothels, called "morality houses," and using the traditional religious custom of temporary marriage, in which a couple can marry for a short period of time, even an

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hour, to facilitate prostitution. Islamic fundamentalists' ideology and practices are adaptable when it comes to controlling and using women.

Some may think a thriving sex trade in a theocracy with clerics acting as pimps is a contradiction in a country founded and ruled by Islamic fundamentalists. In fact, this is not a contradiction. First, exploitation and repression of women are closely associated. Both exist where women, individually or collectively, are denied freedom and rights. Second, the Islamic fundamentalists in Iran are not simply conservative Muslims. Islamic fundamentalism is a political movement with a political ideology that considers women inherently inferior in intellectual and moral capacity. Fundamentalists hate women's minds and bodies. Selling women and girls for prostitution is just the dehumanizing complement to forcing women and girls to cover their bodies and hair with the veil.

In a religious dictatorship like Iran, one cannot appeal to the rule of law for justice for women and girls. Women and girls have no guarantees of freedom and rights, and no expectation of respect or dignity from the Islamic fundamentalists. Only the end of the Iranian regime will free women and girls from all the forms of slavery they suffer.

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