

MONGOLIA HIGHLIGHT

A Partner in Promoting Justice, Accountability and Prosperity in Mongolia

RESEARCHING THE SCOPE AND INCIDENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITHIN, THROUGH AND FROM MONGOLIA

People are bought and sold as commodities and held in bondage all around the world today. Human trafficking is the forced movement of persons across international borders for the purpose of forced prostitution and labor, and this crime is increasing worldwide and in Mongolia.

The numbers of trafficked victims is growing rapidly in Mongolia: Two victims were reported in 2000; 30 – 40 known victims have been reported in the first half of 2006. Disadvantaged by poor economic conditions, most of these Mongolian women are lured and deceived by false newspaper advertisements that promise lucrative jobs abroad and educational scholarships in foreign countries.

Asia Foundation research has identified Internal trafficking cases that include teenage girls kidnapped off the streets of Ulaanbaatar and locked in hotel rooms where they are sexually exploited. Many trafficked women are sold into prostitution by close friends or acquaintances.

On June 15, 2006, The Asia Foundation and the Mongolian Gender Equality Center (MGEC) launched a nationwide survey to assess the scope and incidence of human trafficking within, from, and through Mongolia.



G.Ganbayasgakh of the GEC interviews citizens at Zamiin-Uud. Mongolian women, men and children ages 14-35 took part in the survey.

The survey was conducted in ten provincial centers and eleven corresponding villages across the country. In addition, the survey examined eight Ulaanbaatar districts, and three of the main border points: Bulgan village in Khovd, Khavirga village in Dornod, and Zamiin-Uud village in Dornogobi.



Zamiin-Uud is the main border crossing between China and Mongolia, and it is the main transit hub for human trafficking

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

According to the International Labor Organization, there are approximately 12.3 million people held in forced labor, bonded child labor, or sexual servitude at any given moment.

A Trafficking Victim is an individual who loses control of their life and decision-making.

Human Trafficking: The act of recruiting, transporting or harboring victims, performed by the use of threat, force, abduction, fraud and deception for the purpose of exploitation.

Trafficking can be cross border or within a country.

The survey included focus groups consisting of students, illegal mining workers, customs and border protection officers, sex workers, and cross-border transporters. Random and non-random sampling was used to select survey participants. The GEC also interviewed with criminal police, trafficking victims, border protection officers, and Mongolian government officials.

In order to quantify the state of trafficking of Mongolian women to China, information was gathered from the Er Lian Hao Te, a Chinese border city in Inner Mongolia. According to the Mongolian Consul General, Mongolian and Chinese Police inspected Er Lian brothels in June 2006. They confiscated eighteen Mongolian passports belonging to women, aged 18 – 25. They found 10 of these women in Er Lian and commenced return procedures when five escaped, presumably for fear of prosecution from authorities or for reprisal from traffickers. Five were rescued by Mongolian police and returned home. Eight women were never found. The precise number of trafficked women in Er Lian Hao Te is unknown. However, Mongolian Police estimate that there are between 200 - 300 Mongolian sex workers in Er Lian.



“Mongol Bar” in Er Lian, one of many bars located in the red light district where trafficked Mongolians find clients.

“The numbers of Mongolian women and girls in prostitution in Er-Lian are greatly increasing.” – The Mongolian Criminal Police Department in Zamiin-Uud

In Beijing, the Mongolian Embassy reports that 20 trafficking victims sought assistance in the first half of 2006. Tragically, the Consul reported that five of the women repatriated to Mongolia, subsequently returned to Beijing to work as prostitutes, no doubt due to bleak economic conditions and a lack of jobs in Mongolia.

The trafficked victims that GEC and TAF interviewed suffer from severe psychological trauma and are isolated from their communities. They fear disgrace and rejection from family and friends. Many return to prostitution.



In the shadowy world of trafficking, many victims return to prostitution after escaping - “Nara,” once a trafficked victim, but now a prostitute in Beijing’s Hollywood Bar says, “I’m working here to save up enough money so that I can go to Japan or Korea to work as a maid.”

The Asia Foundation and the Mongolian Gender Equality Center’s research will quantify and assess human trafficking in Mongolia. Findings will educate and inform attitudes and perceptions of civil society towards trafficked victims. The Foundation and the GEC are working with the Mongolian government and partner NGOs to prevent recruitment, protect victims, and prosecute traffickers.

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