

The hidden crime of human trafficking

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

Did you know that every 30 seconds* somebody becomes a victim of human trafficking? This is a shocking statistic and indicates that we are facing a humanitarian crisis.

While slavery was abolished more than a century ago, the truth is evident that it is more prevalent today than ever – in the form of human trafficking. In fact, there are an estimated 27 million people currently in slavery, or bondage, around the world, and only 1% of these people are ever rescued. In Africa, 4 out of every 1 000 people are victims of trafficking, with females (55%) and adults (74%) most likely to fall victim to such crime.

It's a murky world of young children sold as prostitutes, men held on farms with their passports confiscated, organs being removed or cleaners locked in houses and forced to work, to pay off the money the

traffickers spent importing them.

Human trafficking is a complex, well-organised crime, involving elaborate and extensive networks of participants. The chain includes recruiters, taxi drivers, farm owners, landlords, people buying the services of the victims and henchmen to threaten the victim, or their families.

So, while nobody wants to think of such a horrifying crime, it is important that we consider that this could happen to someone we know and that we ensure we understand the ins and outs of human trafficking – protecting our families and loved ones.

Most at risk are the poor, unemployed, uneducated and those looking for

a better life. Fraud and force are the main methods of recruiting them, by offering false job opportunities abroad in hotels, restaurants or beauty salons, or by promises of contacts in the sporting fields.

Victims are often offered all-expenses-paid travel to their new opportunity, but when they arrive, their passports are confiscated and they are forced to work to repay the costs. To keep them from rebelling, the victims may be drugged or threatened with violence, against them or their family back home.

One organisation fighting to eradicate human trafficking and slavery in South Africa, is the National Freedom Network (NFN). The NFN came about as a result of a number of individuals and organisations that were doing great work to combat human trafficking, but collaboration between them was initially limited. The NFN bridges the gap and helps them share information,

What happens to Victims ?



Sexual
Exploitation



Organ
Trafficking



Forced Illegal
Activities



Forced
Marriages



Forced
Labour



Debt
Bondage

In Africa, 4 out of every 1 000 people are victims of trafficking, with females (55%) and adults (74%) most likely to fall victim to such crime.



tip-offs and best practices. Its goals are to provide easy access to counter-trafficking information, resources, events and news, and to connect people doing similar work, to share ideas and give them guidance.

Its website features news, video clips, academic research (related to South Africa), recommended books to read and movies to watch, and highlights local or international learning opportunities.

To support its work and help drive stronger awareness about this serious humanitarian issue, local advertising company - Ad Outpost – is giving the NFN free street pole advertisements, in addition to monthly financial support. These adverts aim to promote the NFN's latest campaign 'See something, Say something'. The campaign is supported by social media outreach, where the #seesomethingsaysomething hashtag is being used to call on all South Africans to take action against human trafficking.

Recent efforts by the NFN to highlight human trafficking saw it sponsor a short film called *Unthinkable*, which exposed a common form of recruitment into sex slavery called 'Loverboy recruitment' or 'Romeo pimping'.

Other recent efforts include:

- Helping Hope for Women to repatriate a family; and funding social workers to attend trauma training sessions organised by Hope for Women;
- Providing ongoing support to several Safe Houses;
- Contributing funds to the training of over 450 SAPS officials in Limpopo;
- Sponsoring the training of nearly 500 SAPS officials and other stakeholders by Love Justice.

How You Can Help

No matter who you are, you can do something to help. In fact, several victims in South Africa have been rescued because community members were vigilant and reported their suspicions.

As such, consider the following if you want to help:

- If you see something suspicious, report it to the police or the South African National Human Trafficking Resource Helpline on 0800 222 777.
- Educate yourself on the realities of human trafficking, by visiting the Human Trafficking Resources website: www.nfnresources.yolasite.com.
- Volunteer your skills at the NFN, by visiting: www.nationalfreedomnetwork.co.za.
- Donate clothes, non-perishable foods and toiletries to safe houses, or ask the NFN what specific items are needed for safe houses in your province.
- Be a conscious consumer by investigating which industries are

heavily supplied by forced labour, and refrain from using such stores. Buy fair trade products that guarantee no slave labour in their production.

- If you are a business owner, the NFN encourages the offering of internships or skills training for trafficking survivors, or those at risk of being trafficked, and to employ survivors where feasible.
- Create awareness – go as big or small as you want to. Use social media, your company website, blog spot or local newspapers and magazines, or tell your friends and family about what you have learned.

Should you want to contribute financially, you can also donate, as per the below details:

National Freedom Network
First National Bank
Greenstone Branch
Branch Code: 201510
Account: 62531299726

For any tip-offs, you can contact The South African National Human Trafficking Resource Line on 0800 222 777.

Contact Details:

Marina Reyneke, National Freedom Network,
marina@nfn.org.za

*US Department of State: Human Trafficking in Persons Report 2014