



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights,  
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 February 2010]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Trafficking in children**

After drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking is the world's third most profitable trade in the world that is fast growing in some countries. Human trafficking related issues such as slavery, prostitution, sexual exploitation and tourism, racial discrimination, illegal immigration, money laundering, HIV/AIDS, domestic servants etc. have turned the industry into one of the most painful issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's domestic and international levels. By kidnapping, presently hundreds of criminal groups use children as soldiers, labourers, prostitutes, organ donors, or sell them. According to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, "sale of children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration."

It is estimated that each year around 1.2 million children are trafficked in the world, which is over 30% of the number of humans trafficked each year.

The international community has ratified a series of laws and conventions for the prevention and the fight against human trafficking (children in particular) which have been ratified by countries. The preamble of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, expresses concern over the lack of a universal instrument that addresses all aspects of trafficking in persons. Also the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child condemns human trafficking and stresses on methods to confront it. Despite the aforementioned international instruments, we still witness the growth of this illegal industry, which is being escalated alongside globalization.

## **Causes in trafficking in children**

Some factors increase the vulnerability of children with regards to trafficking:

### **a) Poverty**

It cannot be denied that poor children are in greater danger of being trafficked. Parents that have economic problems may sell their children and or push them towards prostitution to increase their income. Poor children are good targets for profiteers. Of course poverty alone is not the cause of social deviations, but alongside inequalities and subsequently changes of values it becomes a threatening flow.

### **b) Inequality of women and girls**

In societies where women are seen as commodities and capital, girls are faced with greater danger. Lack of equality in laws, in view of the low maturity age of girls, facilitates their sexual exploitation through reduction in support levels, to a point where the exploiters may claim that the girl children have given previous consent, and even cause the criminal prosecution of the girls.

### **c) Education**

Without education children are more vulnerable towards deceit, deception and being forced by organized crime groups. Due to the children being unskilled or illiterate which makes others successful in drawing them towards these opportunities with the aim of trafficking.

**d) Abandoned children**

Runaways, orphans and children separated from their families, are all considered as abandoned children. Unsafe living conditions, lack of adult supervision, not having education and lack of necessary skills for their livelihood, makes children vulnerable towards deception and falling in the trap of trafficking groups.

**e) Non-registration of birth**

According to UNICEF's International Emergency Fund, it is estimated that a noticeable percentage of births are not registered. There is a lesser chance of search and arrest in the cases of trafficking a child that for various reasons his or her name has not been registered at birth. The lack of official identity documents for these children makes their tracking and trafficking a difficult task.

**f) Natural disasters and armed conflicts**

Special children's support organizations become weak against trafficking in crises conditions. Poverty, separation from the family, homelessness, hunger and other effects of war and natural disasters make people vulnerable against the traps of exploiters.

**g) Cultural and social denial**

In societies where trafficking in children and its consequences such as sexual exploitation and rape are deemed as taboo subjects, the dangers of children falling victim increase. Social denial and silence result in the exploiters to continue their abusive acts without any worries about being discovered and investigated.

Various forms of prostitution, pornography or trafficking facilitate the market for customers and profiteers. Just as in any trade there is a tendency towards increased profits, more children are also drawn towards this trade and sexually exploited through deceit and force.

As a human rights nongovernmental organization, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) expresses its deepest concern on the daily increase of human trafficking (children in particular) at the global level. Having long borders with seven neighbours, Iran is not exempt to this serious problem, but it is the crossing point for this organized crime and faces numerous challenges nationally and internationally.

The lack of coordination between international organizations involved in the fight against human trafficking (such as the UN) with each other and with countries is just another example of these challenges on the issue, which result in the waste of time and resources and failure in concentration on the fight against trafficking in children.

The lack of implementing and enforceable mechanisms within international conventions are some of the problems in the way of the fight against human trafficking.

## **Recommendations**

The human rights perspective which is respect of human dignity and protection against discrimination and oppression must provide a protective definition of victims of human trafficking within international laws and conventions.

In view of the trafficking in children being an international and organized crime, it is out of the hands of one country in combating it. Therefore the cooperation of all countries in the fight against the forging of identity documents, review and amendment of laws for the

confrontation with traffickers and strengthening of the borders between countries and the monitoring and support proves of the Human Rights Council can all be positive measures in the reduction of this phenomenon.

It is clear that both in national and international levels, if the abovementioned recommendations are heeded, we shall witness a reduction in the horrifying dimensions of this phenomenon, otherwise with the globalisation process and the further opening of borders we shall continue to witness the daily increase in human trafficking – women and children in particular.

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