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THE CAMPAIGN

THE PROBLEM

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Human trafficking is an organized criminal industry that affects every nation. While the statistics can seem overwhelming, it is important to remember that every number represents the life of a human being. The A21 Campaign has recognized a significant need and is committed to combating this injustice through rescuing one life at a time.

LIFE FOR A SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIM

After a trafficking journey that typically involves deception, rape, beatings, and constant threats, victims are often forced to live in confining and unsanitary conditions. Once formally put to work, human trafficking victims can be forced to service from 40 to 110 customers in one day.¹ Malnutrition, sleep deprivation, as well as emotional and physical abuse become part of the day-to-day routine.

In addition to the abuse, forced abortions and the contraction of STDs, Hepatitis B and C, and AIDS are ever looming probabilities. Life for a victim of sex trafficking is an incomprehensible evil. This injustice is the reason The A21 Campaign exists.

THE STATISTICS: FOCUS EUROPE

We recognize the global need for rescue, rehabilitation, and restoration. However, we noticed a lack of resources, restorative care, and legal representation for victims in Europe. Because of the growing need, we started our flagship office in Greece and have grown to additional field offices in Bulgaria and Ukraine, and administrative offices in the United States, Australia, and Great Britain. Here's why:

- Human trafficking is the second largest global organized crime today, generating approximately 31.6 billion USD each year. Specifically, trafficking for sexual exploitation generates 27.8 billion USD per year.²
- There are 1.39 million victims of commercial sexual servitude worldwide.³
- Over 25 percent of sex trafficked victims are trafficked from Southern and Eastern Europe.⁴
- 90% of victims trafficked into the European Union member states will end up in the sex industry.⁵
- Tragically, only 1-2 percent of victims are rescued, and only 1 in 100,000 Europeans involved in trafficking are convicted.⁶

GREECE – A PRIMARY DESTINATION

Greece is known as “the center of trafficking in Europe.”⁷ Greece is a primary destination and transit country for human trafficking and is the primary gateway for trafficked victims to enter the European Union. 90% of all European Union illegal immigration is through Greece.⁸ Trafficked victims are moved frequently, both internally and across borders, to evade detection. Human trafficking is a

THE PROBLEM

hidden crime in Greece, with most citizens unaware of the gross human rights abuses occurring in their own city. Approximately 20,000 women, including 1,000 girls between the ages of 13-15, remain in the Greek sex industry.⁹ According to The Trafficking in Persons Report; these victims are primarily from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Nigeria.

UKRAINE – A KEY SOURCE

Ukraine is a source country for trafficked women, and is currently one of the largest exporters of women not just to the European Union, but also to the Middle East and South East Asia.¹⁰ The "exotic beauty" of Ukrainian and Russian women has made them the most valuable commodities in the current international sex trade.¹¹ Over 420,000 Ukrainian women between the ages of 15 and 27 have been trafficked in the past decade.¹² One study reveals that one in every ten Ukrainian citizens knows someone in their community who has been trafficked abroad.¹³ Around 440,000 people in Ukraine with HIV, considered one of the most severe HIV/AIDS epidemics in Europe.¹⁴

Ukraine is also increasingly becoming a destination country for trafficked victims, as its popularity as a sex tourism destination grows. These victims originate from South East Asia, Africa, and other Eastern European states.

In addition, Ukraine suffers from a huge domestic trafficking situation. Unofficial numbers state that there are 250,000 prostitutes in Ukraine, 200,000 of whom are in the industry against their will and could most likely be classified as domestic trafficking victims.¹⁵ Domestic trafficking is not just for sexual exploitation, but also for organ removal and labor exploitation.

RE-TRAFFICKING

While in Asia, 20-25 percent of survivors are re-trafficked, in Eastern Europe an estimated 80 percent of rescued women end up re-trafficked.¹⁶ Most of this re-trafficking occurs within the first two years of their escape. Since the year 2000, over 7,000 victims of trafficking have been repatriated back to the Ukraine.¹⁷ The need for transition and reintegration assistance for these victims has been recognized by the Ukrainian government. However, efforts to supply this assistance have been limited by a lack of funding.¹⁸

BULGARIA - SOURCE, TRANSIT, AND DESTINATION

Bulgaria is a source country for human trafficking as well as a transit and destination country for women and children trafficked into the sex slave industry, as well as forced labor of men, women and children.¹⁹ It is estimated that 10,000 Bulgarian women alone are trafficked yearly,²⁰ both within the country and to destination countries. Trafficking within the country is particularly concentrated in resort areas and border towns.²¹

THE PROBLEM

One study found that there is an average of 8,000 and 12,000 Bulgarian victims of sex trafficking abroad at any time.²² They have an average of six clients per day, 270 working days per year and 70 euro paid per client, proceeds averaging 900 million to 1.3 billion EUR per year.²³ Experts believe 50-80 percent of these profits are funneled back into Bulgaria via money laundering.²⁴ Bulgaria appears to be the leading source country for victims of trafficking in Germany and Greece and the second source for Netherlands when taking into account number of cases per capita for 2009.²⁵

ROMA

Ethnic Roma men, women, and children are particularly vulnerable to becoming trafficking victims²⁶ due to ethnic discrimination, poverty, high levels of unemployment, illegal money laundering, growing up in state care, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and complicity of family members trafficking their own children and family.²⁷

Roma constitute the single largest ethnic minority group in Europe, with an estimated population of 10 to 12 million, approximately 6 million of whom live in the European Union.²⁸ Research done in 2010 indicated that Roma represent 50-80 percent of trafficked persons in Bulgaria.²⁹ Research confirmed that Roma are trafficked for various purposes, including sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, domestic service, organ trafficking, illegal adoption and begging.³⁰

THE UNITED STATES – SOURCE, TRANSIT, AND DESTINATION

Human trafficking is on the rise in the United States. Over 17,500 victims are trafficked in the U.S. annually and approximately 33% are American citizens.³¹ The full scope of the problem has yet to be determined, as the crime of human trafficking is often intertwined with drug trafficking and prostitution.

Trafficking in the U.S. often occurs through street prostitution, massage parlors, brothels, and for labor in domestic service, agriculture, manufacturing, janitorial services, hospitality industries, construction, health and elder care, and strip club dancing. U.S. citizen victims, both adults and children, are predominantly found in sex trafficking; U.S. citizen child victims are often runaways, troubled, and homeless youth. Foreign victims are more often found in labor trafficking than sex trafficking. The top countries of origin for foreign victims in Fiscal Year 2010 were Thailand, India, Mexico, Philippines, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic.³²

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE IN EUROPE

While human trafficking is a global issue, the growth of trafficking of women from Eastern and Southern Europe (the former Soviet Bloc) into Western Europe over the past 20 years has been unparalleled anywhere else on the globe.³³ This trend has developed due to a specific combination of factors:

THE PROBLEM

FALL OF COMMUNISM:

The fall of communism had devastating effects for the nations of the former Soviet Bloc, where "widespread poverty, social inequalities, booming shadow markets, corruption, and rampant conflicts" soon became the norm.³⁴ Floundering economies resulted in a "devastating reduction in living standards for the majority, with poverty emerging as a widespread issue."³⁵ From the perspective of human traffickers, the fields became ripe for harvest.³⁶

IMPACT OF POVERTY ON WOMEN:

A characteristic of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the return to a traditional male dominated family structure with a shortage of labor positions that unevenly affected women.³⁷ Unemployment rates for women soared, ranging between 70 and 80 percent in most of the former Soviet republics.³⁸ Out of desperation to gain financial security, women have become more likely to take risky recruitment offers, leaving them susceptible to the deceptions of traffickers promising decent employment in another country.³⁹ Even more concerning is that, many women have lost "all self esteem and hope for the future" and have become more likely to accept offers they know are linked with the sex industry due to the belief that "it cannot be worse than their present lives."⁴⁰

EU IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS:

Heavy entry restrictions into Western Europe created a "strong demand for clandestine migration, heavily supplied by criminal networks. Many of these criminal networks took advantage of the vast numbers of willing migrants and diversified from human smuggling into the more lucrative sex trafficking industry. Thus, thousands of women from Eastern Europe attempt illegal migration with hopes of employment, peace, and a better life, are finding themselves enslaved as prostitutes upon arrival in Western Europe."

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME:

Generating \$12 billion US dollars annually, trafficking women has become the second largest global organized crime today.⁴¹ Criminals formally involved in illegal drugs and weapons trafficking are finding profit margins in human trafficking and are now using their extensive networks and well-worn trade routes for sex trafficking.⁴² In the Soviet Bloc, shadow economies were relied upon under communism to supply necessary goods and services undersupplied by the state.⁴³ However, since the fall of communism, these shadow economies have quickly grown and mutated, absorbing desperately unemployed men and women as both traffickers and the victims of trafficking.⁴⁴ Additionally, corruption amongst border officers, police, soldiers, and government officials undergirds and sustains human trafficking.

THE PROBLEM

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THE PROBLEM

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THE PROBLEM

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THE PROBLEM

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