

STOPTRAFFICK.IE

Cases of human trafficking for sexual exploitation from Ireland, Lithuania, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Finland



Alterations to names and locations have been applied in order to preserve the anonymity of the people concerned



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STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING!

EC funded project researching strategies to discourage demand for services from victims of sex trafficking.

Partners: Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), Klaipeda Social and Psychological Services Centre (KSPC), Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies(MIGS), MONICA –Multicultural Women's Association of Finland

What is Human Trafficking?

ACTION

'..the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons,

MEANS

by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person,

EXPLOITATION

for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs'

Human trafficking statistics in Europe

Women and girls make up 79% of all victims of trafficking

76% of victims of trafficking are for the purpose of sexual exploitation

14% of victims of trafficking are for the purpose of labour exploitation

3% of victims of trafficking are for the purpose of forced begging

1% of victims of trafficking are for the purpose of domestic work

EUROPOL Trafficking in Human Beings in the European Union 2011



Greta's story

Originally from a small village in Moldova, Greta was only 25 when she was offered an opportunity to move to Italy. Her boyfriend would arrange for her to work in the agricultural sector. While he was not able to travel with her, he promised that he would join her later after completing business he had in Moldova. Her transport was quickly arranged. She would fly to Spain first.

Upon arrival at the airport, Greta was met by a number of men. The house that Greta was taken to, was the location in which her horrific ordeal would begin. Here Greta was locked into a small room and left alone. On the first night, four men took Greta from the room, led her into the forest, and took turns raping her. Following this, Greta was mercilessly beaten, resulting in the loss of most of her teeth. It was now that Greta learned the true nature of her 'work' abroad. She had not been brought to work in the agricultural sector, but as a prostitute in the sex industry.

After Spain, Greta's sexual exploitation in Italy lasted for 3 whole years. In this time, her pimp would transport her across the country to sell her to waiting customers. When she was not being abused, Greta would be locked into a room with other girls in a similar position. Greta was only able to escape when the door to this room was accidentally left unlocked.

Greta hitchhiked to France where local police put her in contact with an NGO that could provide support. She did not wish to return to Moldova, the place from where she had been trafficked. She was psychologically shattered from the exploitation she had suffered, unable to speak the local language and had no realistic opportunity of gaining employment. Greta became addicted to the medication she was receiving to treat her fragile, psychological state. Lacking any alternative choices, Greta returned to her country of origin. Greta was not recognised as a trafficking victim and unable to receive any support from the State-run service providers in her State. She eventually received shelter and other supports from an NGO. After only three days, Greta left the care of this NGO. Nothing is known of her whereabouts since.

Agne's story

Agne was only 16 when she was trafficked for sexual exploitation. Prior to being trafficked, Agne had attained a secondary level education and worked as a sales woman in small shop. Agne had a close, personal relationship with a man who became her trafficker. This relationship, combined with her desire to make a better future for herself, led her to leave Romania. What she was unaware of at this time, however, was the intention of her would be trafficker.

To ensure control over her, Agne's trafficker frequently subjected her to psychological abuse during her transportation into the United Kingdom. This included frequent threats against her, and those close to her, if she failed to meet the needs of her traffickers.

Upon arrival in the United Kingdom, her situation only deteriorated. Agne was forced into prostitution. She was forced to "service" buyers in a number of locations; including on the street, out of private apartments, hotel rooms and in clubs. She received up to 10 men a day. She was only given about €200 per month. Like countless others exploited by traffickers, Agne experienced more than one type of exploitation. Additionally, she was exploited in domestic servitude. Agne's ordeal lasted for 7 years, before she escaped with the assistance from one of the men who purchased sex from her.

Now back in Romania, it has been difficult for Agne to recover from her ordeal. To make matters worse, in order to cope with the trauma of unrelenting abuse, Agne became addicted to alcohol and drugs in the United Kingdom. This has made her recovery all the more difficult.

Kristina's story

Kristina was a small land owner from Latvia. Holding only a primary education, there was little opportunity for Kristina to improve her economic situation. An acquaintance of Kristina informed her of an opportunity to work abroad. This opportunity would allow Kristina to travel, start a new life and provide for herself. In order to finance her new life, Kristina was forced to mortgage the land she owned. The money would pay for her travel expenses.

From Latvia, Kristina was first taken to Brazil. In Brazil her travel documents were confiscated. From Brazil, Kristina was transported to Turkey. There, she was forced to work in prostitution. She had no control over the number of men who would buy sex from her per day and received no remuneration from her traffickers beyond a small amount of food. Kristina describes where she was kept in Turkey as being something between a stable and a slum. After a few months in Turkey, Kristina was provided with false documents and taken first by boat and then in the boot of a car to Greece.

In Greece, Kristina's nightmare continued. Her traffickers forced her to continue in prostitution. On average she was forced to endure between 10 and 12 men a day. She had to sell herself on the street, in apartments and out of hotels. She continued to receive no remuneration. Unable to get any help from the men who bought sex from her, Kristina's circumstances in Greece remained the same for months.

Eventually, a woman with whom Kristina had worked with put her in contact with a local organisation. They were able to assist her in escaping her traffickers.

Victoria's story

Victoria had studied to be a pharmacist at college. Unable to find work as a pharmacist, she worked a number of low paid jobs. In the hope of improving her economic situation, Victoria decided to look for any work abroad.

A friend informed her of opportunities to work in the Spanish sex industry. Victoria's friend arranged for her the travel to Spain.

What Victoria was not aware of, however, was the conditions surrounding her "new job" in Spain. Upon arrival, her travel documents were confiscated. This included her passport and work permit. Without these, Victoria could not prove that she was in the country legally. Further, Victoria's work in Spain was not limited to prostitution. She also had to work as a 'masseur', a dancer and a stripper. She had little control over the number of buyers she would receive on a daily basis. And, while it is unclear whether Victoria received any money for her 'work'; she did suffer violence at the hands of her exploiters. Victoria was forced to remain in these conditions for just under a year.

Unable to get assistance from the men who bought her, Victoria was eventually helped by a woman in a similar situation who was in contact with a local organisation. At the request of Victoria, she was returned to her home in Romania.



Ama's story

Ama was only a 14 year old child when she was trafficked from a West African country to Belgium. Originally promised a life of opportunity in Europe, Ama was immediately forced into prostitution by her trafficker.

She was informed that it had cost €50,000 to get her into Belgium. Regardless of the fact that she was just a child at the time, she would have to work in prostitution until she had paid off this 'debt'.

Life in prostitution was very difficult for Ama. Owing to a "slow business", Ama was forced to provide unprotected sex to buyers whenever it was asked for. This led to two pregnancies. During the second pregnancy, she was forced to abort the baby late into the pregnancy. Ama tried to escape on a number of occasions but this only led to retaliations against her family in Africa. Her father was killed and her mother and brother forced to flee their home.

With help, Ama was eventually able to escape her ordeal in Belgium. She fled to a Baltic State where she was recognised as a victim of trafficking and is in receipt of support.

Unsurprisingly, however, it has not been possible for Ama to recover. She has been left traumatised by her experiences.



Nuru's story

When she left her home, Nuru believed she was travelling to France with her boyfriend in order to start a new life. However, the reality was that she was being transported by her boyfriend for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Europe.

Before leaving, a spiritual ritual was performed with the purpose of binding Nuru to her trafficker. The exploitation began en route to Germany, when Nuru was forced into prostitution by her boyfriend.

Nuru would spend three years trapped in prostitution by her boyfriend. During this time she was forced to work both on street and off street, as a private escort.

On one occasion, when Nuru was able to escape and make her way back to her family, she was followed, threatened, her mother was seriously assaulted and Nuru was returned to Germany. She was threatened that both her and her mother would be killed if she did not continue in prostitution. To make matters worse, Nuru fell pregnant twice during her time in Germany. Throughout these pregnancies, Nuru was forced to continue in prostitution.

While the circumstances surrounding Nuru's eventual escape from her boyfriend are unclear, once she had escaped she was in no position to cooperate with State authorities. Her silence had been ensured through the spiritual ritual that had been performed prior to her departure, leaving her extremely scared. As a result, Nuru was unable to receive assistance and was deported back to her country of origin.

Elena's story

Elena was still a child under the age of 18 when she was trafficked from Ukraine to France for sexual exploitation. Prior to leaving Ukraine, Elena had not completed secondary school. Her parents had died a number of years earlier, and there was no one who could provide her with the support she needed.

It was Elena's boyfriend who recruited her. He asked her to accompany him abroad. He promised her marriage and the opportunity for the two to work together. After Elena agreed, he arranged for them to travel to France. Once in France, he broke all promises and rather than marry Elena, he forced her to sell herself in prostitution. Elena would have to see up to 10 buyers a day. This ordeal lasted for over 14 months. Elena had no choice over the buyers that she would see, and the acts which she had to perform. Elena escaped after 14 months with the assistance of one of the men who used her. With the help of the Ukrainian embassy, Elena returned to her home country.

Elena's experience has left her devastated. She has shut down emotionally, she is suffering from depression and exhibiting signs of post traumatic stress disorder, including recurrent nightmares about her ordeal. The physical toll of her time in France has left her with a dislocated disk. She has experienced gynaecological difficulties which require protracted treatments. To make matters worse, Elena faces the possibility of being HIV positive. She has undergone a number of tests, the results of which have been inconclusive.

Georgi's story

Georgi was 21 when she was trafficked to Germany for sexual exploitation. Prior to being trafficked, Georgi had spent much of her life in State care. She never knew her parents. At the age of 19, after leaving State care, Georgi relocated to Kiev. There, Georgi was able to get a job in the textile industry. After a year in this job, Georgi was offered an opportunity to work abroad. An acquaintance informed Georgi of opportunities in the German textile industry. This would allow Georgi to move abroad and earn more money. Once in Germany, however, Georgi learned that there was no such job. Her identity card was taken and she was forced to prostitute herself.

For the next five months, Georgi was forced to sell herself out of hotels and hostels, seeing up to five buyers a day. Despite earning her traffickers lots of money, Georgi received little back. With the help of one of her buyers, Georgi was eventually able to escape. She made her way to the Ukraine embassy which assisted her in returning home. Back in the Ukraine, Georgi is once again in State care. Medical tests have revealed a number of gynaecological problems arising from her time in the sex industry in Germany.

Additionally, she has experienced a number of psychological difficulties. She is unable to build meaningful relationships with those close to her.



Sarah's story

Sarah had suffered sexual abuse a number of times in her home country before being trafficked into Scotland. After her parent's death, Sarah lived with her aunt. She forced Sarah into an arranged marriage. In this marriage, she suffered rape and abuse at the hands of her husband's son. After returning to her aunt, she was forced into a second arranged marriage. In this marriage, Sarah would suffer similar abuse. She was frequently beaten and raped. After two years in this marriage, and with the assistance of a male friend, Sarah was able to escape. This friend took Sarah to a second man. This man offered Sarah the opportunity to work as a maid for his sister. Once Sarah had agreed, her travel to Scotland was quickly arranged.

After arriving in Scotland, Sarah was transported to the home of the man's sister. There she was informed of the true purpose of her travel to Scotland. She was to work in prostitution. Sarah was locked into a room in the home of the sister, and forced to receive between 2 and 3 buyers a day. Sarah, however, was not only forced to prostitute herself. On a number of occasions she was transported to a club where she was forced to perform as a stripper for the clientele. Sarah was only able to escape when the sister forgot to lock the room in which she was being kept. Like others in a similar situation, this was not the end of Sarah's ordeal.

Sarah's claim for refugee status was denied. The State authorities found insufficient evidence to support her claim to be recognised as a victim of trafficking. This was despite her ongoing cooperation in the investigation of her traffickers. This was all followed by a deportation order.

Gabriele's story

Orphaned at the age of 4 when violence erupted in her home country – Gabriele was forced to flee with her aunt and uncle to a neighbouring country. Gabriele along with her aunt and uncle, lived in a refugee camp for the next 10 years. At the age of 14, Gabriele was forced to flee this camp in order to escape a dangerous, arranged marriage. With the help of her aunt, Gabriele escaped to a nearby, major city. There, Gabriele was able to find work in a restaurant.

It was not long, however, before restaurant work turned to sexual exploitation. Gabriele was forced to prostitute herself by the owner of the restaurant. While working in prostitution out of this bar, Gabriele never received any of the profits received from customers. She did, however, fall pregnant and give birth to a daughter. Living in these conditions, it was not difficult for Gabriele to accept an offer for a better life for herself and her daughter in Europe.

Not long after the offer had been made, Gabriele was met by another man who arranged for her travel to Europe. With this man, and two other women, Gabriele travelled to Italy by plane, and from there on to Prague. It was only now that Gabriele learned the better life she had been promised for herself and her daughter was no different from the life she had just escaped. She had been brought into the Czech Republic with the sole intention of forcing her into prostitution. In the first residence that she was taken to, Gabriele was luckily able to escape through a bathroom window. From there, Gabriele was helped to safety by a passer-by.

For Gabriele, this escape did not mark the end of her troubles. Not wishing to return to the country of her original exploitation, she applied for legal residency in Ireland. Gabriele's claim for refugee status was denied. She initially cooperated with the authorities in their investigation into her claim to be a victim of human trafficking, but was unable to continue due to illness. As a result, Gabriele is unable to receive protection as a potential victim of trafficking in human beings. She has also applied for subsidiary protection, which would allow her to remain in the Czech republic. A decision is still pending in this regard.

For further information

Visit stoptraffick.ie

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