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National NGO report to the UN Human Rights Council: Evaluation of
National Authorities activities and Actual facts on the sex industry in
Israel as it is viewed in the Internet

Forwarded to Sigma Huda, the Special Rapporteur on
trafficking in persons, especially in women and children

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Virtual Sex Industry in Israel

Introduction:

This report is the sixth annual report done by Machon Toda`a (Awareness Center) , an Israeli NGO representing the International Abolitionist Federation, on trafficking in women and prostitution in Israel. This report is the result of continuous research of Machon Toda`a - Awareness Center .

Since 2001 Machon Toda`a is handing to the UN a detailed shadow report on the state of the sex industry in Israel. In every one of Machon Toda`a's reports to the UN it was indicated that we did not have the resources to obtain and analyze the data on the sex industry in Israel via internet. Since the internet and virtual reality have become inseparable part of a high percent of Israeli citizens lives [mainly youth], we, at Machon Toda`a, have decided this year to entirely focus on the phenomenon of the virtual sex industry in Israel. In order to do so several websites were examined (online escort services, pornography sites, sex stores, sex games, child pornography sites(groups and forums), and chats, as well as hearings in the Knesset , law enforcement agencies and Ministries.

The report will focus on three areas:

- A) Reviewing the situation today.
- B) An account on how the Israeli authorities are dealing with the issue, and what actions they are taking. Is their strategy of action corresponding to the strategy of action taken against the trafficking of women for prostitution purposes An inspection of laws, and verification of their enforcement.
- C) Conclusion and recommendations.

Machon Toda`a wishes to thank Maxim Burt for his focused and outstanding work that made it possible to refer to this issue and to raise it to discussion and analysis.

Introduction:

This report is the sixth report of Machon Toda`a regarding the phenomenon of the sex industry in Israel. In the previous reports the phenomena of prostitution and trafficking for

prostitution purposes (non virtual) were reviewed, and regrettably, in the past two years, except for the legislation of a significant and innovative law against trafficking of human beings in November 2006 , not much has happened. Attached in the index is Machon Toda'a and Isha Le`Isha's report that was sent to the United States State Department on February 2007, in it can be found a detailed report of the situation.¹

In an interview that was published in "Globes" on – 25.2.07², Hadas Magan interviewed Commander Meyer Gilboa, a retired long time activist against the phenomenon of organized crime in Israel. The interview took place in honor of the establishment of a specific new unit in the Israeli police force to combat organized crime. It was announced that a new unit would be created to combat organized crime families. The unit would dedicate a joint team of investigators for every crime family in order to embitter their lives. In this interview Commander Meyer Gilboa points out that: "The idea is in fact a variation of a previous police plan that already failed. It was a plan that was initiated by the former head of the Police Intelligence Unit, Ilan Franko, who allocated the crime organizations to the treatment of different police units. Every regional unit was responsible for handling a different crime organization. The plan failed because in organized crime you cannot investigate phenomena starting at the head of the organization. It is true that he gives the orders, but he compartmentalizes himself from substantial activity and is not involved. The command and its execution are disconnected, therefore focusing on the head makes it difficult to produce evidence. The investigations of the phenomenon of organized crime need to encircle the entire phenomenon, meaning from the bottom to the collection of money. The organization is hierarchical and bureaucratic, and therefore even if the head of the organization is put behind bars the organization will continue to work, and not only that – generally the head of the organization will continue to operate it from jail. The investigation of the phenomenon of organized crime needs to include every aspect of it – starting with the sources of money and their connection to the heads of the organization, which is twisted and long – gambling, activation of brothels, extortion of protection money, drug distribution - between the "pusher" at the bottom and the importer there are ten ranks, thus the investigation needs to be along the lines of all ten ranks, if you really want to

¹ A joint report by Machon Toda'a and Isha L.Isha that was handed to the US State Department in February 2007 - Index.1 in this report.

² Globes, 25-26, February 2007 pg.3, Hadas Magan.

stop the activities of the organization and not just let the head of the organization sit behind bars. In the end of 2004 during three months we observed a boom of police action focusing on gambling and brothels, but after a short while it ceased. The action needs to be continual. The purpose is not just to dry out the sources of money, but essentially to produce evidence, so that it will be possible to bring forth higher positioned "soldiers" of the organization to trial. Due to the fact that the fundamental goal of crime organizations is profit, an attack in the financial direction is vital. A witness protection program is elementary – which exists but is not implemented. This is one of the most essential components of this combat”

Commander Meyer Gilboa emphasized another issue that needs attention: “It depends which persons are placed in these units. For 3 or 4 years there have been over 500 investigators in these elite units. Despite the rise in human resources, as absurdly as it might sound, these investigators seldom receive any special training regarding investigations and intelligence prior to their enlistment, rather just in the course of their work. It is necessary that a police investigator knows beforehand what to do with the suspect before him, and this police training fails to teach. The recruited are great accountants, but they are not investigators, and the police is not doing anything about it.”

In the past few years in Israel, there has been a drastic increase in the privatization of numerous social services that the state is obliged to provide by law. Private organizations and business corporations are being given the responsibility to care for the old, the mentally disabled, the physically disabled, kids, youth in danger, battered women, sexually assaulted persons, etc... The following research published on March 2007 clarifies the issue. The research done by Dr. Miriam Shif from the school of social work, and Shivtati Levit – a social work doctoral candidate and manager of the Methadon center in Jerusalem³ - was published and titled “Most of the drug addicts experienced sexual abuse in their childhood”:

15% of the treated persons in the rehabilitation centers are women

72% of the women in the centers suffered sexual abuse in their childhood and a third suffered sexual harassment at a different point in their lives.

33% receive treatment for posttraumatic syndrome.

60% have been arrested or imprisoned at some point in their lives.

³ Haaretz, 7.3.2007 pg.9 news. Ruth Sinai.

72% of the women discriminated against in rehabilitation centers suffered from sexual abuse in their childhood, and despite this fact only a third are treated regularly by social workers in order to help them cope with the posttraumatic syndrome they suffer from.

“ The lack of social workers that specialize in treatments for post trauma makes it difficult to rehabilitate these women”, said Dr. Miriam Shif. “The Women that come to rehab suffer from additional abuse by men that come for treatment. As result of the findings of this study an effort will be made to separate the men and women. It was also found that women struggle to arrive at these centers because they have no one to supervise their children, and their societal and familial support are scarce.”

The 15th of March 2007 was pronounce as the international day of mental health. In this context the national newspaper "Ma`ariv"⁴ published statistics on the suicide rate in Israel. Anat Goldstein from the "JOINT" informed that 400 people commit suicide each year, a hundred of which were below 24 years old. It is estimated that more than about 2,500 incidents that have not been reported. Dr. Yifat Cohen, a child psychiatrist in the Ministry of Health, was quoted that the phenomenon of suicide among young persons is due to a difficulty to identify subjects with destructive tendencies. “In the absence of a governmental authority that will centralize the information database and will follow-up this issue, it is difficult to confront the problem,” said Cohen “To my regret after locating the relevant persons, the line in the mental health clinics is long and there is no one to care for them.” Cohen reported to the committee (the Committee for the Prevention of Suicide – L.G.G) that the risk groups with suicidal tendencies include those who have suffered a sexual or physical assault, drug addicts, and alcoholics. One of the important parameters in youth suicide is a low level of self-exposure.

⁴ Maariv, pg.7,5.3.07, Arik Bendar and Moran Katz.

A. Review of the situation of the Virtual Sex Industry in Israel today:

Most of us bury our heads in sand under the misconception that something virtual can't really harm society, youth, the next generation in real life. The Ministry of Education pays no attention to the demands of parents and teachers who on a daily basis witness the influence that the exposure to internet has on children and youth with no way back. A tiny example of the internet's pervasion into the public space might be seen in an article by Merav David on March 29⁵, 2007: "A 12 year old boy, D., who is waiting in line to be received at 'Nave Choresch", the only diagnostic institution in Israel for youth in danger, was arrested by police after stabbing another boy in the neighborhood. He was released because the Ministry of Welfare informed the Police that at that point there was no framework of specialized care that could receive him. D. is a figure of a leader, gathering around him a group of kids ages 10-11 that much of their time is dedicated to watching porno videos and planning burglaries."

In March 2007, the "Elem" report was published in the newspapers. To our regret, despite several repeated requests by Machon Toda'a, we weren't able to get a hold of the entire report this year. According to the report (as it was published in the newspaper⁶), approximately 30,000 kids are wandering the streets of Israel. The number of homeless youth went up 10% in the past year. Above 1000 adolescents are involved in prostitution, 27% of which are girls and that number has been steadily rising in the past 5 years. Most of the wanderers have dropped out of school, have no stable familial framework, and a part of them suffered from sexual abuse in their childhood. Zion Gabai, general manager of Elem, informed that now they are finding kids ages 10-13 wandering, exposed to different kinds of exploitation and to the use of different drugs and alcohol. Elem also informed that throughout Second Lebanon War (in summer 2006) there was a 500% increase (five hundred percent!) in the number of appeals of mental strain to the association's support website. Approximately 130,000 adolescents visited the website in the past year, and the lives of two girls who informed of having suicidal thoughts were saved. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of girls treated by the Ministry of welfare` "girls in distress" Unit. In the last three years there was a 50% increase in the number of young girls found by the association. It is estimated that

⁵Ma`ariv, 27-3-2007. p.8,

⁶,Meirav David, Ma`ariv 28.3.2007, p. 14- Ruth Sinai, Ha`aretz 23-3-2007, news p.11

in Israel there are 34,000 young girls in distress – half of them are not being treated. Another stirring statistic provided by Elem, is that of every 1,000 adolescents that are involved in prostitution 60% operate through the internet, using chat rooms and acquaintanceship websites, thus making it difficult to track them. The report indicates that just until a few years ago many of the adolescents that were involved in prostitution did so in the street, making it easier to find them and assist them.

Sex Industry on the Net

In the past few years, the sex industry on the internet in Israel and all over the world has gradually increased. Statistics of 2006 affirm that approximately 72 million web surfers in the world enter pornography sites every month. The sex industry's yearly revenue stands at around 5 billion dollars. In the United States alone, every second there are roughly 28,000 web surfers viewing pornography, and every 39 minutes a new porno movie is created. Every day new websites are created that offer a wide range of sex services, such as ordering an escort through the internet, online striptease and cyber sex services for a fee, online sex game websites, and numerous virtual sex stores. According to an article in the New York Times published in "The Marker " 8.June 2007 a global tendency was detected recently that the profits of the pornography industry were considerably reduced because of the internet. AVN magazine evaluated the profits of the pornographic industry in USA from pornographic websites to amount to 2.8 Milliard dollars in 2006 versus 2.5 milliard dollars in 2005 – much lower increase in profits than other industries. This is due to the fact that the new technologies and U-TUBE made it possible for every amateur to insert homemade porno movies and porno users can get most of the material they need for free.⁷

Online Escort Services

The development of the internet and the virtual sex industry along with a sharp rise in the number of internet users in the past few years increased the number of "escort girls"⁸ ordered through the internet. Today every person connected to the internet can easily and without even leaving his house enter one of those websites, and then choose and order an "escort girl" to his likings. Dozens of "escort girl" sites are advertised in most of

⁷ Mat Richtel, The New York Times "Sex does not sell" translated to Hebrew and published in The Marker , p.31. 8 June 2007 www.themarker.com

⁸ A laundered term for a person in prostitution.

the on-line guides and Israeli search engines, suggest ordering an "escort girl" online. Admission into these sites is also open to children, there is no screening of web surfers entering these sites aside from the "adults only" warning, and in order to enter the website all that is required is to agree to the terms of use, and agree that you're over 21. Such a does not really block children's access to these sites.

On the escort service websites it is possible to view pictures of escort girls, and details such as age, weight, language spoken, price per hour or night, etc... These websites offer hundreds of escort girls that are divided into different categories such as "young", "old", "V.I.P girls", etc... There is an option to order an escort to your house, or a hotel that offers escort service. In order to contact an escort it is enough to contact the escort service through the website, or call the number advertised on the website.⁹ On the net there is also a forum called Israel Sex Service (ISS) which is a sort of wiki updated by devoted sex services customers , where every bit of information regarding the Israeli "Escort girls" is quickly updated. To subscribe to this forum one needs to be referenced by another member and should have a male ID

Online Porno Broadcasts

On the internet there are dozens of Israeli websites in Hebrew that broadcast porno movies online, some of them charge a fee and some of them are free. Some of the websites that broadcast online pornography are created by TV sex channels, and some of them belong to private companies of the Israeli film industry that create and market pornography. Sex movies on the internet give multiple variety of themes, according to the preference of the customer, from soft porno, sadomasochistic, couples or group sex, gays, lesbians as well as extreme violent and bizarre phenomena – everything is catered to the viewers choice.

According to the assessments of the adolescent branch in Israeli Ministerial authorities, a huge number of adolescents view sex movies on the internet, and sometimes the viewing is done in groups. Entrance into these websites is simple enough, and practically anyone who declares to be over 18 is authorized to enter these websites and watch movies. The work techniques of several of the internet sites demand that the user call a number abroad, to receive a "secret" code, copy the code in order to open and

⁹ ISS, NET SITE.

view the desired sex movie for as long as the international call continues. Customers who hang up the phone immediately discontinue the projection of the movie on the computer. Some of the websites offer to watch a minute or less without payment as a sales promotion in order to allow the browser to watch a part of the movie, and decide if it is in his/her interest to watch the entire movie for a fee. Following is an example that shows how easy it is to abase a young girl nowadays. In an article that was published in "Globes" in July 2006¹⁰ : "Humiliation in the class book: the student "porno star". A high school student (A.) from Jerusalem left her graduation ceremony after discovering that it was written in the class book without her consent that she starred in blue movies. The students who put together the book won a prize given by the School management for their work. Since the event, the student has shut herself in her house, and refuses to arrive for the matriculation exams that are held at school. The piece published about A. (the student) bore the title "Blue Section". "It is a disgrace that my grandmother came to the graduation ceremony, and read that her granddaughter made a porno movie on the internet". A. turns serious allegations to the school's directors for not doing anything to prevent the abasement: "It brings shame upon the school's name, which usually puts such emphasis on values, honoring and respecting thy fellowman, etc... Where did they respect me? There are no grounds for the claims written about me in the class book. I work hard to make a living, am an excellent student, and am designated for a mission's officer course, and they stained my name unfairly". The school informed that the student consented to what was written about her, however the student and her mom claim that A. didn't consent to what was written and when she asked about it, her fellow students promised her a "surprise" in the class book. The Ministry of Education stated: "We view the situation very gravely. The schools administration received an order from the Ministry of Education to withdraw the class-book, and print a new version without the aforementioned piece, as a first step for dealing with the matter". Almost a year has passed since the incidence was published. It is important to verify where the matter stands.

Online Sex Stores

Dozens of websites in Israel and thousands around the world operate as virtual sex stores. Virtual sex stores offer thousands of different sex toys, accessories, and

¹⁰ - 14.7.2006 YNET for Globes "Abasemnt in the school book – a student is a porn star"

pornographic movies on video and DVD. Simplicity, discretion, and complete anonymity, allows every surfer to feel secure while browsing online sex stores. The surfer feels comfortable, and does not feel ashamed, while ordering or purchasing sex products up for sale on virtual sex stores. This comfort and anonymity allows thousands of internet users to use the services of virtual sex stores, and virtual activity amounts to a profit of millions of shekels. All the products that are available at these stores are sent to the customer via mail or via messenger in discrete envelopes.

Webcam girls

Shulamit Almog wrote an interesting and innovative thesis in 2007 on the phenomenon of – Webcam Girls (teenage girls filming on the net, henceforth W.G). The thesis was based on an activity that is occurring on the Israeli website “Tapuz”. W.G. is an interdisciplinary phenomenon, which belongs to the world of feminist research and the representation of female sexuality. The research of the virtual world and of the freedom of expression exhibited in it as of superior value is expressed in different ways (like exhibitionism), and the issue of sex on the net. This study will deal with, and not just dab, in every one of these fields in order to examine if the W.G. genre strengthens the patriarchal sexual order that’s accepted in the real world, or alternatively breaks this acceptance and creates a space where a women’s sexuality is freely expressed and even rectified.

Conclusions of the study: “In light of everything said, my hypothesis was not supported although not entirely refuted either. There are two parameters that influence the character of the conclusion: First off, through whose eyes are we looking at the phenomenon, the eyes of the man or those of the webcam girl? Secondly, the disparity between the websites is what caused the second generation to be more blatant and emphasize a more sexual and provocative side. What ostensibly makes the use of web cameras on the internet unique is the ability to make use of materials and distribute them as part of the pornography industry on the internet. During cyber sex chats, a woman can be exploited and viewed as an object, but her body can’t be used visually, and there is no substantial material that can be used. Moreover, web cameras do not compel one’s interaction as a requirement for sex; rather they comprise a stage for the women and a striptease show for the man, thus not requiring actual interaction. Indeed she who is exposing herself is happy to receive feedback from her viewers, and the performance is

not dependent on this interaction. Consequently it is fair to say that the women views the act as self empowering, and the stage as a means for expressing her sexuality, but on the other hand the man, who sits in front of the computer can view the same stage as one belonging to a strip club, and from here the path to the objectification of women is short”.

One argument that Shulamit Almog raises in her study is that “According to the freedom model, web cameras constitute a reclamation because the women is using her own sexuality, that which has been exploited over the years by men, to empower herself. She is releasing herself from the oppressing chains of social order and societal conventions regarding sex and the woman’s function in it” .The writer does not accept this argument at face value though. An argument that the writer is more identified with is: “Is the only way for women to achieve this rectification by perpetuating the use of their bodies? can’t the sexual liberation take place behind the walls of a woman’s home, between her and her partner? Does female empowerment arise from the liberation of sexuality and the freedom to express it, or maybe the origin needs to be sought in societal and political environments? The conclusion provided is that, “At this point I have no answers, and in order to try and answer the question an additional study should be conducted, which would profoundly examine the past of the women who appear on these web cameras. Are they arriving at this form of expression from a “healthy” environment, that is “whole” and are entirely in control of what is being done and aware of the risks, or from an lacking environment where the influence of different shortages, abuse in the past, etc is salient...”.

Online Sex Games

There are many websites on the internet that have “virtual worlds” that give web surfers all over the world the option to meet other surfers and have cyber sex with them or cyber sex with the virtual image (Avatar) created on the computer, including images of minors. These virtual worlds can in fact replace reality in innumerable ways, allow crimes without victims to whoever is interested in severing their violent desires and sexual impulses without bringing real harm, etc... Despite this many studies show that virtual pedophilia and virtual violence cause harmful and damaging acts in reality. In the past year there has been a great development of virtual games, for example “Second Life”. An article

that was published in March 2007 in "De Marker"¹¹ reported findings of a survey that showed the latent potential in these places for the "exploitation industry ".Survey: Market value of virtual worlds in the west above a million dollars. Millions of people have signed up in masses in order to take part in these worlds. "Habbo Hotel", "Second Life", and "World of War-craft" constitute platforms for new environments and diverging tendencies, and there is also a rise in the different ways in which these games sweep in revenues. The new types of MMOG (Massive Multiplayer Online Games) that can be identified include virtual worlds such as "Second Life", raising charming pets virtually like Neopets, puzzle or lounge games that require the participant to acquire items in order to build a new image (Avatar). Experts in this field argue that virtual societies can be expected to enter the market as a result of the widening popularity. More than 10 million people are expected to register for memberships by 2011, and millions more will play computer games by means of other forms of payment, such as purchasing and virtual advertising".

How is this article related to the topic of this report and to Israel? In the De-Marker of November 24, 2006 was published an article titled "A different journey- the game of life", written by Shachar Samocha.¹² The newspaper messenger, Shachar Smoocha, set out to explore the unknown territories of "Second Life" (the internet game that simulates a virtual world that requires those who wish to enter it to purchase a pre-designed identity (Avatar) of their choice and wander between islands and streets of virtual cities, to visit and participate in performances of famous singers and artists that are advertised in the virtual world, but exist in the real one(such as Madona, Hard Metal and others) and the performances are virtual performances. They can spend virtual money that they purchase with real money in the real world. As of this Sunday, half a million real American dollars were exchanged in this virtual world that is based on "the collective will of its society". Israeli export to "Second Life": a Madam who runs a sex-club and fashion designer. Naam Bucksbaum, another journalist of De Marker, that examined the Israeli angle, argues that Israelis have not yet discovered this virtual game and their presence is not yet felt but in fact the Israeli real persons that entered this world are managing in this virtual world a sex club, and a fashion boutique for shaping the Avatar`s physical appearance and wear. "The figure that stands behind the Avatar, or the name of the

¹¹ DE MARKER 22 ,MARCH ,2007

¹² DE MARKER ,24 November 2006, p.31, Shachar Samocha

figure, Loly Hoffman, is pseudonym. The person in the real world does not wish to reveal her real name. But Loly has already received exposure due to her occupation as the owner of Barbie – the first and vastly popular sex club on "Second Life". The club offers a variety of virtual stimulations, beginning from striptease shows through intimate meetings, to every form of deviation, as long as it's mutually agreed upon. Of course, these pleasures are not free, and Loly has discovered that her profits of the club, that employs 100 workers, reach 500 American dollars a month, "It covers my rent", she indicates. "The club caters for the cyber community and less for regular consumers of sex services" explains Loly. "I don't want girls who are too vulgar, because my customers are high class, although I can't explain what people find stimulating about two illustrated figures engaging in sex" she admits. In any case, for her it is a business: "If it brings in money – let them enjoy" she says.

Loly indicates that she has been in the game for over two years, but just recently awareness developed among "Second Life" players regarding the business potential of the game, then Loly also moved into the sex business. Today Loly spends less time in the game, and the club is run by salaried female managers, that are also responsible for recruiting manpower, for training and maintenance. "I have a wide variety of workers, some with families, elderly, and young. If I know my worker is a male – he is fired, but if someone acts and plays like a women it is impossible to know" says Loly. "In Second Life there is plenty of room for entrepreneurship, but now the game is big and the competition between companies is growing" she says. She also has a business vision that she refuses to give details about and only reveals that she acquired a small island along with her British partner Ethai, that costs 1200 real dollars, which they rushed to purchase before the rise in property prices that the owners of the game initiated. They are planning on establishing a new club on this island, that they would be able to entertain up to 100 customers at any given moment – instead of 40 today. An additional plan of theirs includes marketing websites outside of their game, with an aim of reaching customers that are not regular players in the site."¹³

Newsgroups

The history of spreading contents on the internet began with the development of the Usenet network in the 80's. Before the breakthrough of the first public browser, a

browser called Mosaic, and following it Netscape, the popular services for spreading contents and sharing them among internet users, which were still not referred to as “surfers”, the software that enabled electronic mail and newsgroups was the Usenet. The electronic mail software facilitated the sending of texts between two users or between one user and more than one user. An internet user that is not in the group, is not able to read the text sent, unless he requests someone forward it to his electronic mail. In order to distribute information to everyone, a service similar to electronic mail was opened called Usenet, which is short for user’s network. Usenet included several newsgroups in various subjects that any user can join and read previous discussions that he did not partake in, and send his response and insight to that group. Sending material to that group is essentially similar to sending electronic mail, except that instead of an electronic address of the receiver, a newsgroup address is written.

Usenet developed into one of the clearest examples of the de-centralization on the net. There is no authority or central body that is responsible for tracking the information on Usenet. The addition of a new newsgroup, is bound with a stiff democratic process that takes place in another news group called – "news admin". In fact, pornographic materials and child pornography, first reached the internet in a Usenet news group. Today, the Usenet network connects between tens of thousands of surfers from all over the world, together with other different networks that are considered an anonymous place for every surfer, where it is possible to distribute or to find and download onto the computer illegal contents.

Communities and Forums

The internet is open to all surfers from all over the world and allows all surfers to write in different forums according to their interests, make new connections, meet new people, receive information through forums and communities, to assist and be assisted by different forums in searching for information. Also pedophiles use forums. There are many forums and communities on the internet for pedophiles. Different forums allow pedophiles to distribute child pornography, to receive information on websites and other pedophile forums, to find or send links to downloading pictures or movies of child pornography, to receive assistance in searching for pedophile material through the Usenet network or other such software. On these forums they advertise the “keywords” that are intended for searching for child pornography on the internet, they advertise

many offers for buying or selling child pornography materials, and they advertise information regarding the laws in different countries. They also give recommendations to surfers – pedophiles - on how to remain anonymous on the internet, how to protect information and what protection software to use in order to block access to policemen, as well as how to act and what to do in the event that policemen arrive at the pedophile's house. On these forums surfers – pedophiles - inform of occasions where they had sex with minors. Entrance into these types of forums, in most cases, does not require so much as registration and every surfer from every part of the world, including kids, can enter these types of forums.

In addition to multiple pedophile forums there are also pedophile clubs, like for example “The Wonderland Club” that is known to many from the media. These types of clubs are barred and it is difficult to find them. In order to enter and register for this kind of club, generally, it is required to send the management of the club a couple of thousand child pornography photographs or movies created by the pedophile that's requesting to join the club. In a few countries there are legal pedophile organizations, for example the NAMBLA organization in the U.S, the BOYLOVERS club in Russia, or the DPA in Denmark. These organizations claim to be against violence or abuse of children, and for “clean love” between the adult and the minor. Several studies have shown that all pedophiles want and dream of having sex with minors, and can go through with it, despite their claims.

P2P(Peer-to-Peer networking)

The technology of peer-to-peer networking allows a computer that is connected to the internet to share files that exist on other internet users` computers or allow other users to share onto their computers files that exist on your computer. The purpose of this software of peer-to-peer networking is to allow the transferring of different files among millions of surfers from all over the world. There are a few peer-to-peer networks that are open to all surfers, networks such as eDonkey, Gnutella, Direct Connect, etc... The use of peer-to-peer networking allows the surfer to remain anonymous and this caused the flourishing of shared files networks where a massive distribution of illegal materials (child pornography, snuff movies, etc...) was done. This distribution method makes it difficult for the police to capture criminals. Although there have been attempts at fighting this phenomenon (such as prohibiting peer-to-peer networks in different hubs like for

example DC) these kind of networks continue to be spread. Just like in all other parts of the world, in Israel there are participants. Internet suppliers in Israel, such as Bezeq International and Netvision, saw the phenomenon as a large business opportunity and sold high-speed internet packages at powerful speeds. The obvious result – almost every home in Israel is connected to the internet with high-speed internet. According to research that was conducted in November 2005, 70% of the internet trafficking of internet providers is for the purpose of file sharing. File sharing networks are the most popular form of communication among pedophiles, and other perverts. In the past year the number of reports of pedophile contents on the networks has risen by 400 percent, and the contents have become more and more foul.

Statistics indicate that there are 116,000 searches a day for “child pornography” on the “gionatella” network alone. Monthly trafficking of pornography files on peer-to-peer networks stand at – 1.5 billion downloads. According to a study that was submitted to the American congress, 44% of all pictures that are downloaded through file sharing programs are child pornography, 29% are adult pornography, and 13% include erotic pictures of kids. Only 14% of the pictures are not pornographic. As a result of this the law enforcement authorities have increased their participation in order to site the distributors of these pictures and to save the children being exposed. Moreover, the research has shown that the search for animated movie or child stars displayed results, of which 34 percent of the materials were pornographic, 14% animated pornography, 7% eroticism exhibiting minors, and 1% pornography with kids – a total of 56%. According to this data there is a good chance that minors searching for material on a new television star or a new animated series, will come across pornographic materials.

There are many file- sharing programs on the internet and every internet user can easily download and activate such a program, most of these programs are free. Use of these programs is legal, it is easy and evident for every person and every surfer can find through these programs whatever he wants, including illegal files. There are dozens of “keywords”, like for example [r@yagold.pths.babyJ](#) ,in finding and downloading child pornography material.

Most “keywords” include certain content:

[r@yagold](#) - is a nickname for “the king of child pornography” on the net Richard S. Goldberg that is on the FBI’s top ten list. PreTeen HardCore-Pthc, babyshividi, and babyJ – child pornography movies and pictures series of kid’s up to age 5-6. All of the “keywords” and their meanings can be found on pedophile forums and communities and in a few dictionaries on the internet.

The Israeli police have not been successful in combating the problem of child pornography on peer-to-peer networks. Machon Toda`a has the information regarding a case where a citizen gathered information on 14 pedophiles that use file-sharing programs to download and trade child pornography materials. He filed a complaint against these individuals with the Israeli police, but the Israeli police refused to receive the information on the 14 individuals. They agreed to accept the complaint on only 4 Israeli surfers that own child pornography materials, and explained that they don’t have enough staff and time to deal with all of them. Recently the Israeli police decided to expand their team of officers working against child pornography and pedophilia on the Israeli internet from 10 officers to 200 officers.

Chats and Instant Messaging

Many chat systems that exist in Israel and in the world and popular instant messaging programs (Messenger, ICQ) that are familiar to every internet surfer allow internet users to chat with one another or in groups. Moreover, most of the instant messaging programs and some of the chats have the option of video conversations. Surveys that were conducted in 2006 indicate that 1 of every 7 kids that visit chat rooms, or use instant messaging programs received indecent offers from adults, and most of the kids that continued to chat with the adults received pornographic images and photographs from the adults. 20% of kids that surf the internet indicated that they met up with people in reality that they met through the internet.

Many cases have been discovered where pedophiles have met kids through chats and initiated sexual conversations with them, explicitly proposed having sex, convinced kids to remove clothing in front of the webcam, and convinced kids to be photographed in the nude. There are many known cases where pedophiles have met kids on the internet, through chats or instant messaging programs, convinced them to meet up somewhere,

and then sexually assaulted them. Studies show that most parents of children who have access to the internet do not know about what or with whom their kids are talking to.

Most children that surf the internet, and use instant messaging programs or chat rooms are not aware that the person that they are chatting with could be an adult with bad intentions. Children do not ponder the idea that the person with whom they are speaking that presents himself as being of the same age as them could be lying, and actually be an adult taking advantage of their naivety. Pedophiles in chats easily succeed in “connecting” with a child because they know what could be interesting for a child. Pedophiles see and learn the things that interest children, whether it is television stars or heroes from animated movies, pedophiles use this to meet a child and cause them to feel safe with him. Children “buy” it because they don’t think that their new friend could be dangerous. Aside from that, pedophiles take advantage of kids’ natural curiosity on the subject of sex and sexual intercourse, and thus convince kids to have sexual conversations or remove their clothes in front of the webcam. There are many cases where pedophiles recorded their video conversations with children while they were removing their clothes in front of their webcam’s. They then go on and save these videos on their computers, and either sell them or spread them on the internet and file sharing networks.

On the 08/01/2007 the Knesset passed a law, proposed by the Knesset member Zevolon Orlov, that states that sexual harassment on the internet or telephone of someone under 15 will be considered an offence. Despite the new law against sexual harassment of minors and the supervision of chat-rooms operators, this law is not implemented yet. A journalist from "Ynet news" visited popular chat rooms in Israel in order to examine if the law helps and works in reality. In the process of the examination, it was discovered that the new law does not cause pedophiles to be cautious or suspicious, nor does it prevent them from offering indecent proposals to kids in chats.

Screening Contents

Screening content allows users to control the wide range of content they observe, by installing a specific browser onto their personal computers. The market for screening products developed due to the demand and desire of parents and other groups to limit

the browsing abilities of individuals (mostly children) on the internet. Screening contents on the internet is no simple task. The structure of the internet and the syntax laws that are used by it do not require the identification of the contents posted on its space and therefore the task of identifying internet pages that contain prohibited information is a difficult and complicated task. In the U.S for example, all schools and public libraries are required to install screening programs on their computers, which screen contents that can be harmful to children. In Israel most schools use screening programs as well.

There are a number of ways to screen dangerous content and block access to websites that contain pornography, gambling websites, violence, and sedition.

1. Every surfer can limit his own access to “dangerous” websites and harmful content on the internet by the use of screening programs. The internet offers a wide range of different types of screening and blocking software programs, including free software programs. These programs make it possible to block entrance into “prohibited” websites, chat rooms, and instant messaging programs(Messenger, ICQ, etc...). Internet service providers and governmental agencies, including the police and ministry of communication, view the installation of screening programs on computers by parents as a satisfying solution to the problem of minors` exposure to harmful content on the internet. The downside to these software programs is excessive blocking of websites and barring websites that do not contain harmful content. Despite the fact that there are many screening programs on the internet, there is no such program that screens 100% of harmful and dangerous content. Furthermore, these programs do not take care of harmful content that is in the Hebrew language.

2. Screening content through search engines and web guides (websites that provide links to different websites according to subject). Every surfer uses search engines and website guides in order to find and arrive at requested information. On large search engines, like Yahoo and Altavista, there is a SafeSearch option that helps screen websites with harmful information when searching, but anyone can easily disrupt this option and not screen content. On Israeli web-guides and search engines there is no option to screen content and children have easy and unlimited access to porn sites and websites with harmful content.

3. Screening content through internet providers. Most internet providers in Israel offer a screening service with payment. The following is a chart that provides information on the screening service of the 4 leading internet providers in Israel¹⁴:

	<u>Netvision</u>	<u>Barak 013</u>	<u>Gold Internet</u>	<u>Bezeq International</u>
<u>Name of the program</u>	Screennet	Web Defender 013	Screening Content Service	Ikeeper
<u>Price</u>	10 Shekels per month	9.90 Shekels per month	9.90 Shekels per month	9.90 Shekels per month
<u>Form of screening</u>	Automatic screening of websites. Option to choose categories or particular websites not to block.	Automatic screening of websites according to category and time of surfing.	When the program is activated it is only possible to browse websites that have been individually examined by a team of experts and approved for children	Automatic screening of porn and gambling sites
<u>Canceling program</u>	Solely by means of password	By means of password	It is possible to browse freely by means of a password	By means of a password. Neutralization of the program without a password is only possible by computer formatting
<u>Subscribing rates among customers</u>	No data	20%	1%	5.7% of the private customers
<u>How is the program offered to customers</u>	Advertisement on the home website		Through billing; Special mailing on the subject; advertisement on the home website; Contact centers	Part of the companies children course

¹⁴ Deffending minors from harmful content in the internet – a brochure published by the Research and Information center of the Knesset, 3 October 2006 , Written by: Etti Weisblay, Confirmed by: Sharon Sofer

The above chart indicates the low percentage of subscribers for screening services through internet providers. It also indicates that these services are not well advertised to current or new members by the internet providers, therefore members are not aware of this service or of the dangers of the internet. In 2004 the former minister of industry, trade, and communication, Ehud Ohlmert, informed of an amendment to the internet access service licensing agreement. The amendment obligates internet suppliers to warn members about inappropriate content for minors on the net, and present them with possible options for blocking this content, including screening services by the internet supplier and other programs. The revised licenses require internet suppliers to provide members with a printed pamphlet, that includes a warning regarding the existence of inappropriate content for children and adolescents such as pornographic content, violent content, and others. In reality, this regulation is not implemented and many internet providers do not warn surfers and new users about harmful content and do not offer them screening services. On the 28/02/2007 in a primary reading, the Knesset approved a law proposal that would limit access to adult sites on the internet, submitted by MK Amnon Cohen. According to this law proposal, internet suppliers will be obligated to block websites that contain harmful content, pornography, gambling, and violence from minors. These websites will be blocked and access to them will be allowed only through physical or biometric identification of the surfer. It remains to be seen if the law will actually pass and if so what will be the actual possibility to implement it.

B. Measures taken by national authorities

This chapter will deal with the actual laws and measures taken by Israeli state authorities, the Knesset and the relevant Ministries to actually confront the flamboyant situation of the Sex industry in the Internet.

Existing laws: (as reported in the Knesset brochure "Protecting minors from harmful content in the internet")

1. Communications law (Bezeq and broadcasts), Hatashmab - 1982

According to the communications law (Bezeq and broadcasts), 1982

(Henceforth: Bezeq law), all “bezeq service” providers must hold a license given on behalf of the ministry of communication. Bodies that provide internet access services operate by the limits of the license issued to them by the ministry of communications.

According to Adv. Liat Gellzer from the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry supervises the bestowal of licenses to Internet access providers. However the examination of the implementation of this measure by Knesset investigators exposed the fact that only a minority of Internet access providers fulfill the requirements of the license.

Ministry of Communications` policy concerning the Internet`s contents emphasizes the importance of cooperation between all relevant agencies, including regulation agencies, in the formation of a regulatory process that will provide a comprehensive answer to the problem out of an understanding of the present and future technological map.

2. Computers law – Hatashna - 1995

The computers law was legislated over a decade ago, and it deals with felonies committed through computers. **The police argues that the bounds of this law do not concern the internet.** Commander Yitzchak Almog, head of investigative assistance Department of the Israeli police who was approached for comment regarding this issue argued that the police does not deal with these issues because the distribution of harmful content on the internet is not considered a criminal offense.

3. Section 214 of the penal law, 1977 – Hatashlaz. the advertisement and display of obscene pictures

This section is rarely set in motion

In the magazine “Police Sightings” from 2002 an article was published on the topic of online pedophilia, with attention paid to current laws (in 2002 and which has not changed since then):

- Section 214 in the penal law – prohibits the advertisement and display of obscene pictures of a person under the age of 18.
- There is no distinctive legislation that prohibits the distribution of pornographic pictures on the internet
- If a server website is working in Israel, a document search warrant can be issued from the network administrator, in order to locate the address of the computer from which the website is being activated, and to identify who is behind that computer. If the webpage is being activated from the suspects' server, a search warrant can issued.
- If the server from which the website is being activated is found abroad it is possible to request investigation assistance from the police of the country where the server is located, in order to confirm the IP number
- If prohibited child pornography material is distributed in a newsgroup or a forum on the internet, according to the document search warrant, it is possible to locate the IP number of the distributor and the details of the internet supplier¹⁵

In January 2007, a law proposal, which is attached to the law of preventing sexual harassment, was passed. The Knesset approved in a second and third reading the law proposal - two years imprisonment on whoever sexually harasses minors through the internet. The proposal that was labeled "The law proposal for the prevention of sexual harassment (amendment number 4)(harassment of a minor under 14 years of age)" constitutes a amendment to the law regarding prevention of sexual harassment passed in 1998. According to the version that was passed, it is possible to cast two years imprisonment on an adult that offered proposals of a sexual character to minors under the age of 14. The amendment also determined that the acts of the harasser would be considered sexual harassment even if special relations did not take place between the harasser and the minor (such as authoritative relations, dependence, education or treatment). The reference to the internet is not in the body of the proposal rather in the explanation. Dr. Yitzchak Kadman, the chairman of the "Council for the well being of children" which initiated this law proposal, was quoted on the website for the "Ha`aretz" newspaper saying "Every sex pervert will know that even if he did not intend to commit a felony and

¹⁵ The information regarding the existing laws was taken from the article "online pedophilia" in "Police Sightings" by Anat Bashan published in 2002 volume number 189

only intended to chat, the moment he proposes something sexual to a minor he is breaking the law.”¹⁶

In fact this law proposal is a pointer to a sad reality. It means that neither the Knesset nor NGOs that pretend to protect the youth in Israel have not grasped the full extent of the crime. In contrast to other countries where the sentences for harassment via internet amount to 10 and 20 years imprisonment or more, Israel is exceedingly merciful.

In the past few years there have not been any dramatic developments or changes in governmental strategy or policy on the subject. In 2006 the Knesset’s center for research prepared a booklet providing an examination of the subject from the aspect of the protection of minors from harmful content, but there was no reference to how pornography site operators or child pornography file sharing activators would be located and brought to sentence. In February 2007 during a conference regarding the well being of children in Beer-Sheva, deputy commander Avi Aviv, head of the Computer Crimes Department, notified that a new alignment will arise in the Israeli police comprising 200 officers and two units. Among other things the new alignment will deal with sex crimes on the internet. MK Zevulun Orlev and the Minister of Communications, Arie Athias, were quoted as demanding that additional laws be legislated that would confront sexual harassment and protect children from harmful websites. www.Law.co.il wishes the new computer crimes alignment much success, and recommends the respected MK and Minister to consider the history of other countries, which includes failed attempts to legislate laws for the screening of content on the internet. Source: **Globes** (Machon Todaa joins the wishes and the recommendations).¹⁷

The Deputy Commander Meyer Zohar, commander of the Computer Crimes Unit of the Israeli Police, was dismissed from in October 2005. A new commander did not fill his place for a long period because the police claimed that there was a difficulty recruiting computer experts in the unit for fraud investigation, as the candidates to this position need to be experts in both fields – on the one hand police investigation, and on the other show expertise in the IT world. That is what the head of the unit,

¹⁶ <http://law.co.il/shownews.php?d=h&news=3263>

¹⁷ <http://law.co.il/shownews.php?d=h&news=3345>

Commander in Chief Miri Golan, said at a convention that was held at Netvision conference on the research of internet on Thursday 12.1.2006. According to her, the Israeli police department has 54 suitable investigators, part of them in "YACHA" (The Computer Crime Unit) and part of them in different police units throughout the country. "What is being spoken about is knowledge and understanding of a complicated world, the investigators are required to understand the different computer languages, to produce evidence that will be admissible in court without causing damage, to access erased files, and more", said Golan. She also added that the level of professionalism required of these investigators is very high. According to her, computer offences receive the necessary attention from the police, but the police have additional tasks, such as financial crime, international crime, dealing with organized crime families, etc... "There is no problem with the law itself, just its enforcement" claimed police representatives in a hearing at the Knesset committee for the rights of the child (25.10.2006), which dealt with the protection of minors from harmful content in the internet. Chief inspector Yitzchak Kaziel, police officer of computer crimes, informed the committee that the primary problem in the police's work is the collection of intelligence information. According to him, only one intelligence officer (one!) in the police force is responsible for computer crimes. The total number of computer investigators in the police force is 40, but most of them, deal with regular fraud cases. These days the police are examining a plan to establish a national unit that would include hundreds of investigators and intelligence officers for the investigation of computer crimes.

"No police officer will search for offenders on the internet", stated Kaziel. He informed the committee that he himself impersonated a 12 yr old girl in a chatroom. He built a story that the 12yr old is sick in bed at home, instead of going to school. According to him, within seconds he received proposals to undress under the blankets and touch himself in intimate places. Another police officer during this session called for the legislation of a law that would prohibit the connection to harmful content, and told about how the Walla! Website included in its game section a link to a "game" that, according to him, included, blatant sexual relations with minors. "The law is all and all ok", summarized the the Police officer. "Our problem is mainly professional manpower."

Indeed, even if laws exist (and it seems as though there is still much to be done), and even if they are enforced ther is a third party, the court of Justice, that needs to

understand how harmful are its sentences when it grants an offender the minimum punishment of 12 months when minimum punishment of the same crime in the U.S or other countries in Europe entitles 20 years imprisonment!

The following case is an example of the court's leniency towards an offender whom the Israeli police was ordered to arrest following the FBI unit to combat international pedophilia orders:

The sentencing was given in May 2007. Doron Michael, a pensioner who was born in 1936, was convicted for holding child pornographic material, and later admitted to the accusations in a plea bargain. Shalom Court Judge, Chanan Afrati, presented the verdict and sentencing. The criminal investigation was opened against the offender as a result of an international investigation and the appeal for enforcement by American FBI unit battling international pedophilia. In the process of the investigation, it was discovered that the accused surfed the internet and downloaded and burned compact disks of pornographic material in it minors that appear under the age of 10. The court considered that the accused was elderly with no criminal history, and that the pornographic material was not distributed but only held in possession. The accused was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment with probation, a fine, and he was obligated to sign a pledge assuring that he will not break the law. Attorney Eyal Cohen from the Tel Aviv State Attorney represented the state { [פּוֹרְנוֹגְרַפִּיָּה מִיִּכְאֵל דּוֹרוֹן מִיִּכְאֵל 07/2576 מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל נ' דּוֹרוֹן מִיִּכְאֵל](#) }¹⁸.

As a result of the above, it is clear that neither the Knesset nor Governmental agencies are taking any action to build a serious strategy for battling the virtual sex industry corresponding to the strategy of action taken on the subject of sex trafficking.

Following is an example of action held by joined forces of police and tax authorities effectively used to combat online prostitution? In September 2006, according to an article that was published on YNET Tax authority investigators and the Israeli police have recently been browsing among Israeli sex sites on the internet, with the purpose of obtaining evidence on pimps and traffickers for prostitution purposes, as well as money laundering, and tax evasion. Among other things, the investigation led to the arrest of Amir Guri from Tel Aviv, the operator of the website "The Palace of Pleasures". This website, which allows customers to order women who will arrive at

¹⁸ <http://law.co.il/shownews.php?d=h&news=3536>

their houses or a hotel, within 30-45 minutes, demonstrates the virtual prostitution problem in Israel of 2006. In this website all the personal details of all the women displayed, including a gallery of photos (though faces in the picture are blurred).

Source: [Ynet](#)¹⁹

In October 2006 was passed in the Knesset a very innovative law to combat trafficking in human beings (see index 1). As a result two teams of action were created, comprised of experts representatives of the relevant Ministries and NGOs representatives, headed by Rachel Gershoni. Their mandate was defined to build a national plan to combat the phenomena of trafficking in human beings both for prostitution purposes and for work enslavement. The teams ended reached a mutual platform of work in April 2007. The Inter-Ministerial Committee headed by Rachel Gershoni will continue working on an action plan based on the decisions taken by the teams. This process ensures following a strategy that answers many of the problematic issues raised during the sessions of the Action-Teams as well as a fruitful collaboration in the long run between the Ministries and the NGOs.

In the last 2 months the Knesset sub-commission handling the issue of Trafficking in women for prostitution purposes headed by MK Zehava Galon held two important sessions that focused on the issues that are still pending in the legal and the financial domains: In the legal domain the participants were concerned regarding the bottle neck in courts and in the financial domain the issues raised were: indemnities to the victims, taxes, confiscation of offenders (pimps and traffickers) property and the establishment of the Fund as is required by the new law and which does not exist yet.

It is true that the processes to establish new strategy and plan of action are slow but at least processes do exist. In 21 May 2007, a week after the session in the Knesset regarding the economic issues was held the Ha`aretz published a poisonous article by the reporter Ilan Shahar, called "How much the state earns from trafficking in women?"²⁰ that focused on all the open issues but does not mention the fact that processes to implement the new law exist.

Following is a quote from this article that shows how much can be

¹⁹ <http://law.co.il/shownews.php?d=h&news=2963>

²⁰ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/861630.html>

21 May 2007, Ha`aretz., Shahar Ilan <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/861895.html>

“ The state actually does profit, because traffickers who have been convicted are fined. In 2004, the fines totaled NIS 216,000 and in 2006, NIS 260,000.

The state coffer also benefits when traffickers are released on bail and disappear. Then the state forecloses on the bail and impounds funds found in the hands of criminals. In the Livshitz ruling for example, the state collected around NIS 91,000, \$2,600 and 700 euros from trafficking in women, but the victim of the trafficking received only NIS 30,000 in compensation, or around 20 percent of the sum confiscated.

At the committee meeting, at least a few other problematic facts were disclosed:

- The law banning trafficking in humans enacted in October 2006 requires the establishment of a fund to combat trafficking in humans, and rehabilitation for its victims. This fund could have been used to assist the victims of trafficking in women, but it turns out that no one is rushing to set up the fund or to enact regulations that would facilitate its establishment.

- So far no indictment has been issued under the law to combat trafficking in humans. This law expands the crime of trafficking in humans to include employing foreign workers in slave-like conditions. Gal-On announced she would approach the heads of the Police Investigation Unit with a request to give this issue priority.

- The enforcement agencies are very proud of the establishment of the integrated hotline to combat crime organizations. But this hotline has yet to set up a task force to combat trafficking in women.”

The issue is complex and problematic. Of course we cannot disregard the fact that up to now a very important work was done, especially by decision makers, following NGOs recommendations regarding the phenomenon of trafficking in persons for prostitution purposes. However there is still a long way to go. There is no doubt that the road is tough and full of obstacles but at least the march has begun.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of the online sex industry , which is the same lady with a different garment, did not get much attention and the combat regarding it is far behind.

We cannot close this chapter without mentioning the issue of awareness campaigns and education programs both to the public as well as to the public servants (Police, Welfare workers, Legal agents)who are exposed to and take care of the persons trapped in this industry. The domain of the web resembles the far west and few are the countries that confront wisely this phenomenon of citizens that are braking the law through the internet. Combating this phenomenon is mostly based on awareness and education, education ,education.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

The internet domain is fenceless. Very few states are able to cope with their law breaking citizens in the Internet. But it is important to understand that the internet is now the main platform of the sex industry world wide and Israel is not spared. We must comprehend that the internet is not “only virtual” reality that remains in the screen. Many are the cases when people are victimized, including children, in reality as a result of surfing the net. Though laws regarding cyber crime do exist in Israel there is no real enforcement of them. There are laws that suppose to protect minorson the web, such as the new law that prohibits communicating of an adult with minors regarding sexual issues. Another law obliges internet providers to inform their new members of the possibility to download content screening programs exists but very few Israeli Internet providers actually implement its content.

We find that the indifference of the Israeli police towards citizens that are prepared to hand in lists of pedophiles acting on the internet is outrageous. The police has the technique and the knowledge to locate and monitor sex offenders on the web and does not use this possibility. However it is very important to understand that even if there will be a regiment of laws, even if large resources will be invested in their implementation and enforcement of these laws this will not be enough to curb the phenomenon of the sex industry on the net. The only real weapon to combat the virtual sex industry is education programs and awareness campaigns.

In conclusion Machon Toda`a – Awareness Center would like to emphasize that the only way to combat the virtual sex industry in Israel is to create the same atmosphere that was created in order to enhance the state to tackle the issue of trafficking of persons for prostitution purposes.

**Therefore Machon Toda`a demands that the state of Israel ratifies the
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children,
child prostitution and child pornography**

**Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly
resolution**

A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000

entered into force on 18 January 2002 ²¹

Apparently as per the UN files on the net Israel only signed this protocol but did not ratify it. The state of Israel signed and ratified the UN CONVENTION AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CRIME.

- Machon Toda`a demands that the articles relevant to cyber crime will be implemented in the Israeli Law and be enforced.
- Machon Toda`a demands that Israel signs and ratifies the CONVENTION OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON THE ISSUE OF CYBER CRIME (open now to the signature of countries that are not members of the EU)
- Machon Toda`a suggests the establishment of a special parliamentary committee for the issue that will lead the way to create an Inter-Ministerial team or to add the relevant mandate to the Inter-Ministerial committee that is now working on the issue of establishing a plan of action to combat Prostitution.
- Machon Toda`a suggests that this special parliamentary committee will include representatives from relevant Knesset committees : The committee on the rights of the child, The committee for the advancement of the status of women, the committee dealing with the issue of trafficking in women.

In 2004 Machon Toda`a closed the report with the following statement:

"We see that Israel made a big progress in the fight against trafficking during 2003 but the issue of prostitution was not handled properly until now. It is about time to reconsider the whole policy on this issue and to make of Israel an abolitionist country de facto and not only de jure. It is a matter of human development. "

²¹ <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/opsc.htm>

It seems appropriate to end this report with the same statement with a small additional word:

"We see that Israel made a big progress in the fight against trafficking during 2003 but the issue of the virtual sex industry was not handled properly until now. It is about time to reconsider the whole policy on this issue and to make of Israel an abolitionist country de facto and not only de jure. It is a matter of human development"



AWARENESS CENTER



Annual Report
U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking
in Persons (TIP Office)

Fighting Against Trafficking in Women in Israel

The Year in Review: 2006
On behalf of Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center & Machon Toda'a
(Awareness Center)

General overview

On the whole, there is a great deal of improvement in the manner the authorities deal with the subject of human trafficking, especially in regards to prostitution. In October 2006, a new detailed law regarding human trafficking was established (Index 1).

In December 2006, two teams were established, both of which headed by Rachel Gershuni, Israel's National Coordinator of the Battle against Trafficking in Persons. The first team's role was to formulate recommendations to be taken into account when a national program for eradicating the phenomena would be activated. There are no statistics, but there is a rise in the way the academy now deals with the subject. Academics contact the relevant organizations to get material for essays and research studies in the field of trafficking for prostitution, prostitution and the sex industry on the Internet.

Nevertheless, unsolved problems still exist, notably bottleneck at courts which hinder graver punishments for the criminals and exaggerated plea bargains that enable severe criminals to get out with light punishments. Understandings made with the former court administrator, Boaz Okun, are not fully implemented. Furthermore, the problem of compensation for victims of trafficking who have already left the country and are unable to get the money in their home countries has returned. Israel cannot declare itself a well managed country unless it stops hindering compensation money, which is intended for trafficking victims in the accounts of courts.

The law against human trafficking, legislated in the Knesset in October, is new, advanced and refers to all humans regardless of origin, without any discrimination. Nonetheless, the authorities, who are supposed to enforce the law, still claim that "it only addresses victims who are not Israeli citizens". We strongly disagree. In 2006, we saw a drastic decline in human trafficking regarding people who are not Israeli. We know only about 20 women who were trafficked for prostitution and entered Israel during the previous year. However, the foundation of the sex industry still stands firm. The foreign women have been replaced by Israeli women from the lowest socio-economic classes, or women who experienced a sexual trauma in their childhood. Furthermore, the phenomenon of minors' prostitution has not been reduced, but increased, when the hunting takes place now through the Internet.

The separation between trafficking in persons and prostitution is extremely problematic. Foreign women have relatively proper solutions, whereas local women experience a complete lack of reference by the court and welfare, even in cases which obviously deal with unwilling prostitution or with youth under the age of 21 exploited in the sex industry.

Last year Rachel Gershuni was awarded with the Knight's Ornament. We strongly recommend awarding Knesset member Zehava Galon this year. She has been doing her job faithfully for the past 7 years, and to her we owe the success of the Knesset legislation of the new law, which can serve as an example to many countries all over the world.

QUESTIONS

1. Is Israel a country of origin, transit, or destination for internationally trafficked men, women, or children?

Israel is primarily a country of destination.

2. What is the extent of the problem? In 2006 the scope of trafficking in foreign women into Israel for prostitution purposes has dropped drastically. Isha L'Isha was in contact with 20 trafficking victims that arrived through Egypt during 2006; all the other victims that were encountered were already in Israel before 2006. Please provide statistics

or estimates for each group, how they were trafficked, to where, and for what purpose.

a. Who are the victims of trafficking?

- i. Please report on all countries of origin, transit or destination for a significant number (100 or more) of TIP victims. Trafficking routes have not changed and neither have the sources of trafficked women (i.e. we are seeing women trafficked from the same countries of origin: Ukraine (54), Moldova (30), Uzbekistan (29), Russia (22), Belarus (1), Kazakhstan (1), Romania (1), and a case of trafficking of Israeli women to Canada and UK (3). All 141 external trafficking victims were handled in 2006 by NGOs.
- ii. If in your analysis Israel has an internal trafficking problem, please include that information in your response. We at Machon Toda'a Awareness Institute are aware of the internal trafficking problem which is not addressed by the authorities as it is still perceived as a local prostitution issue. We have been addressing the problem of local prostitution for the past 10 years and would like to point out that many young men and women are running away from home and falling prey to the sex industry traps. Eilat is a destination for many young runaways where they find "shelter" and are addressed by "good" people who offer them to make easy money through prostitution. We also noted a growing phenomenon of "hunting for new talent" through the Internet in forums and chat rooms (ICQ). There are no formal numbers available, as we have no way to estimate. However, since there is less trafficking in foreign victims, the infrastructure of the sex industry was not destroyed, and the demand has not decreased, local trafficking victims are trapped into the industry through different means. A particularly deceiving one is the striptease and lap-dance industry, which is flourishing not only in the center (Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan where it is licensed by the municipalities) but also in the North and the South of Israel.
- iii. Are certain groups (e.g. boys vs. girls, children, certain ethnic groups, etc.) more at risk? Machon Toda'a estimates that the groups at risk are new immigrants with poor means of survival (especially from Russia and Ethiopia). In the Arab sector there is a growing problem which is not catered for and we are aware of more honor killings as well as forced marriages than we were aware of in previous years,
- iv. What groups are targeted by traffickers? Regarding internal trafficking, the young population at risk is targeted. The Social Affairs Ministry is aware of at least 17,000 girls at risk. There are also young boys at risk who are not represented in

the official figures. According to the statistics of ELEM, an NGO that serves young people at risk, the estimate of young persons in the sex industry amounts to several thousands throughout Israel. Regarding external trafficking neither Machon Toda'a nor Isha L'Isha can pinpoint with certainty targeted groups in the countries of origin.

- b. For what purpose were the victims trafficked?
 - i. Please provide the number of victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (In 2006 141 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation were perceived),
 - ii. the number of victims trafficked for the purpose of labor Not relevant, and the number of overall trafficking victims.
 - iii. Please provide, to the best of your ability, a numerical breakdown by sector for victims of labor trafficking. Not relevant to our line of work.
- c. What are the methods of trafficking?

What methods are used to approach victims? (offered lucrative jobs, sold by their families, etc.) There are several methods known regarding external trafficking into Israel: forced marriages, women sold by their families, offered lucrative jobs, approached by a friend of the family, approached by a friend who returns from Israel, approached by a female friend who persuades to join her in Israel.

 - i. In addition to these methods, Machon Toda'a is aware of more methods in the internal trafficking for prostitution purposes: victims are approached by lover boys (a system which is developed now in Holland and in the UK where young women from difficult and poor surroundings are approached by young men and offered posh treatments (restaurants, clothes and drugs) and slowly are introduced into the sex industry.
 - ii. What methods are used to move the victims, such as false documents? False documents, false marriages (see for elaboration Index 1),
- d. Where does trafficking occur?
 - i. Does trafficking occur within Israel's borders? Yes
 - ii. Does trafficking occur in territory outside of the government's control? Yes
- e. What kind of conditions are the victims trafficked into? In 2006, the conditions of trafficking in women have changed. Isha L'Isha noticed that with regards to external trafficking into Israel the pimps and traffickers have become more resourceful and sophisticated. The external trafficking victims are no longer treated harshly or experience physical violence. They also receive payment but the number of clients increases up to 20- 30 clients a day. The traffickers and pimps use psychological incentives and know how to

get the women to do what they want without any physical force. There is massive usage of drugs. The process of breaking the women and tempting them into the sex industry through drugs is also known in the local methods as explained earlier.

Please provide a general overview of the TIP situation in Israel, and any changes since May 1, 2006. Include your analysis of the government's political will to address TIP. It seems that there is a positive change in the attitude of the government towards the issue of trafficking. There is a drastic decline in the number of foreign trafficking victims who entered Israel in 2006 (20 known cases) as well as better treatment for the victims of trafficking that are iterated by the police and the immigration police units. NGOs are called to identify whether the persons detected are victims of trafficking and if so they are admitted to the state shelter for foreign trafficking victims without delay and have a reflection period of 14 days to decide whether they will be willing to testify. If they decide not to testify, they are deported to their countries of origin at the government's expense. If they decide to testify, they are eligible for a one year staying-permit after the trial is finalized. They are also entitled to receive medical care and rehabilitation treatment at the shelter. The shelter currently facilitates around 40 women and 6 children. In case there is a need to send the women to their countries of origin, the police have a unit that checks if it is dangerous for them to return. If it is confirmed that the victim's return to her country is in any way dangerous, she receives additional stay permits until the time is right for her safe return. The women are officially allowed to work in the country during their stay at the shelter and receive medical coverage for this purpose as well.

However, the problem is that only women who are in the state shelter get medical aid. There are currently 14 other women supported through the Choosing Freedom project, which is a joint project of Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center, the Hotline for Migrant workers, and The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel that is managed Rita Chaikin from Isha L'Isha. Three other foreign victims of trafficking are helped by Machon Toda'a.

During December 2006, a team of NGO representatives and government officials was established by Rachel Gershuni. Its task is to establish recommendations for a national plan to combat the phenomenon of trafficking for prostitution purposes. Machon Toda'a and Isha L'Isha are part of this team as professional NGOs working with the issue. There is another team that establishes recommendations for combating trafficking for labor. There are also trainings for government officials on how to behave with trafficking victims. The IDF calls NGOs to give lectures to the soldiers on the topic. The Ministry of Interior held several conferences on the subject allowing NGOs to present their agenda.

However, in all of the above-mentioned there is a strong emphasis on foreign trafficking and not much consideration for local trafficking for prostitution purposes. The police have not yet acknowledged the fact that the infrastructure

of the sex industry does not discern between foreign and local victims and all are subject to violence and risk their lives in this slavery-like trade.

3. What are the government's limitations in addressing the problem, including aid to victims? (Funding, corruption etc.) No funding is given to the NGOs. For the moment, no medical aid is provided to victims of trafficking that are not staying in the state shelter. (see Index 3)
4. To what extent does the government systematically monitor its anti-trafficking efforts (on all fronts - prosecution, prevention, and victim protection) and periodically make available (publicly or privately, and directly through regional or international organizations) its assessments of these anti-trafficking efforts? On the prevention front, the only activity done so far is by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which distributed a Russian-language flier in the countries of origin to inform potential victims that Israel is a destination country. This activity was done as a cooperative effort of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Isha L'Isha. No other activity in the prevention front is known.

On the prosecution front, the police continue to carry out investigations. At the moment there are 50 persons suspected of trafficking and perpetrating being held, but due to a bottleneck in the courts' schedule they have not been put on trial for a long period. This was the issue in the last plea bargain that was published. Eight traffickers who were held in custody for over a year were released with only a few months in prison and a fine, as the High Court threatened to release them altogether if the case does not go to trial soon. This specific case is very disturbing, as the place where these perpetrators were working is still open and the police raid on the place was filmed by the news to show how the victims of trafficking were held in hidden places and were treated very badly by the traffickers. According to the information NGOs received during a meeting held by the Knesset committee, headed by MK Zehava Galon, there are still 25 cases in the courts. Each criminal's case lasts around 1-2 years because of the bottleneck at the courts and the need for three judges in each of the cases.

There is still not much awareness among judges that the victims of trafficking should receive compensations. Hence, only about half of the cases are resolved with the necessary compensation for the victims. Unfortunately, most of the compensations paid are minimal.

On the victims' protection front there is a very good monitoring and the efforts include a good cooperation with NGOs.

PREVENTION

5. Does the government acknowledge that TIP is a problem in Israel? If not, why not? Yes

6. Which government agencies are involved in anti-trafficking efforts, and which agency has the lead? The Ministry of Justice is the leading agency, as lawyer Rachel Gershuni, the coordinator of the inter-ministerial committee to combat TIP, is issued from this Ministry. Other ministries involved in the anti-trafficking efforts are: The Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Internal Security (the Police and Immigration unit are under this ministry) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mirit Danon, the head of the special council for women's advancement of the Prime Minister's office, is also very active in promoting awareness campaigns and including trainings and campaigns for the Ministry of Education. However, this type of activity has only begun recently and continues at a very slow pace. NGOs see the potential of her willingness and understand that through education much could be achieved in the short-run as well as the long-run. Hence, we are always happy about such fruitful cooperations when they come. The Ministry of Welfare is also involved in the issue, but only through the state shelter.
 - a. Please describe any government-run anti-trafficking information or education campaigns that were used during the reporting period and any changes since the previous reporting period. Not yet
 - b. Please describe what if any specific groups are targeted in these efforts.
7. Does the Government support other programs to prevent trafficking, such as women's participation in economic decision-making or efforts to keep children in school? No
8. What is the relationship between government officials, NGOs and other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society on the trafficking issue? There is good cooperation.
9. Does the government monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking? Do law enforcement agencies screen for potential trafficking victims along borders? NGO representatives were invited to cooperate with law enforcement personnel and compare our different findings on the issue of trafficking in women's patterns through immigration. This brought forward a great leap in both sides' understandings of the profile of a potential trafficking victim. Ministry of Interior employees who work at Israel's international airport are aware of guidelines that can point out if someone entering the country is a potential trafficking victim. If such a case arises they also know the appropriate measures to take.

Regarding the border between Israel and Egypt, a meeting of the parliamentary committee for combating trafficking in women, headed by MK Zehava Galon, has taken place together with the parliamentary committee for battling the trafficking of drugs. It was decided that because the border between Israel and Egypt has not been guarded effectively in the past years, regarding the smuggling of drugs and women into the country, MK Zehava Galon, together with the head of the committee for

battling trafficking in drugs, will present a thorough plan on this issue to the Prime Minister. So far there has not been much awareness raising on the issue of smuggling victims through the border between Israel and Egypt to the law enforcing agencies working at the relevant area.

10. Describe the mechanism and effectiveness of coordination and communication between various agencies, internal, international and multilateral on trafficking-related matters, including both permanent offices and working groups or task forces. **Building an array of traffic victims identification-** Today there is no built-in structure to identify victims of trafficking. A questionnaire was prepared by the immigration police. It is given to women who were caught staying illegally in the country, for them to answer. By answering the questions on the questionnaire (which is available in different languages) a person could be identified as a trafficking victim. However, the people who are supposed to complete the questionnaire usually do not cooperate for lack of understanding. Hence, the matter remained unknown. Nowadays NGO representatives are invited to identify whether someone is a trafficking victim. According to the present procedure, women suspected to be victims are directly sent to the shelter, not to the detention facilities.
11. Does the government have a public corruption task force? **Yes, but it is not clear if it addresses the issue of trafficking.**
12. Does the government have a national plan of action to address trafficking in persons? **Yes. The Task Force for the Action Plan is still working on the issue and will deliver its propositions during the following months.**
- If so, which agencies were involved in developing it? **Representatives of the relevant ministries and NGOs. Were NGOs consulted in the process? Yes**
 - What steps has the government taken to disseminate the action plan?
Not yet relevant

INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

13. Please provide the name (or number) of current anti-trafficking laws, and dates of their enactment and/or amendment. Please include a full inventory of trafficking laws, including non-criminal statutes that allow for civil penalties, such as civil forfeiture laws and laws against illegal debt.
Please see Index 1
- Do the laws cover both internal and external (transnational) forms of trafficking? **The law covers many aspects of trafficking. Unfortunately, the issue of local prostitution is not very clear and not much is done with respect to local women.**
 - If not, under what other laws can traffickers be prosecuted? Are other laws being used in trafficking cases? Money laundering law, organized crime law. **Traffickers can be put on trial also for rape,**

- threatening, involuntary imprisonment, murder (when relevant), money laundering or also trafficking in drugs.
- c. Are these laws, taken together, adequate to address the problem in Israel? The law regarding trafficking is very new; hence we do not yet know what time will bring.
14. Please provide statistics on investigation, prosecutions, convictions and sentences for trafficking, including labor trafficking. The information will be available in March 2007.
- a. What are the prescribed penalties for trafficking for labor exploitation?
 - b. What penalties are imposed?
 - c. Please include details on plea bargains and fines, if relevant and available.
 - d. Is criminal punishment – i.e. jail time – prescribed to employers or labor agents who confiscate workers' passports or travel documents, switch contracts without the worker's consent as a means to keep the worker in a state of service, or withhold payment of salaries as means of keeping the worker in a state of service?
 - e. Were there any convictions for these offenses and if so what punishments were imposed?
 - f. Are traffickers serving the time sentenced? If not, why not? Traffickers found guilty of the crime serve a sentence of between 4-16 years in jail. However, for good behavior some traffickers can reduce their time in jail by a third.
15. What are the penalties for trafficking people for sexual exploitation? Please see Index 1
- a. What are the prescribed penalties for rape or forcible sexual assault? Please see index 1
 - b. How do they compare to the prescribed and imposed penalties for crimes of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation? It is quite difficult for us to compare, for two reasons. One is that we do not work in the field of sexual assaults. The second is that each case is very unique in characteristics. Hence, some trials will end with greater penalties for traffickers, whereas in other cases a person found guilty of sexual assault (for example, of a daughter by her father or guardian) will be sentenced with greater penalties.
 - c. Is prostitution legalized or decriminalized? Please provide specifics of which activities are criminalized and which are not. In Israel prostitution is neither legalized nor criminalized. The laws in Israel follow and implement the abolitionist system which was introduced in the UN convention of 1949 against trafficking in persons and the exploitation of others for prostitution. Persons prostituting themselves are not considered criminals. All activities relating to the prostitution of others (like managing and hiring a place for prostitution, advertising a place for prostitution, pimping, exploiting

- a prostituted person, living off the profits of a prostituted person, etc) are criminal activities.
- d. Is there any information or reports of who is behind the trafficking? Yes, it could be either be freelance operators, small crime groups or large local and international organized crime groups.
 - e. What if any business (travel agencies, marriage brokers, etc.) are used as fronts for traffickers? Sometimes traffickers can use the front of travel agencies, fictional marriages firms or reunion of family members.
 - f. Were any government officials involved? We do not know.
 - g. Are there any reports of where profits from trafficking are being channeled? (Terrorist organizations, banks, etc.) No report was done on the subject **linking** prostitution with the terrorist organizations, Drug dealers, and trafficking of weapons. However, there are specialists in the Police and in Criminology faculties who are well aware of the situation.
16. Does the government actively investigate cases of trafficking? (Again, we are not asking about smuggling cases.) Yes
- a. Does the government uses active investigative techniques in trafficking investigations? More so in Central Israel and much less in the North of the country. We have almost no information of the proceedings in the South of Israel
 - b. To the extent possible under domestic law, are techniques such as electronic surveillance, undercover operations and mitigated punishment or immunity for cooperating suspects used by the government?
 - c. Does the criminal procedure code or other laws prohibit the police from engaging in covert operations?
17. Does the government provide any specialized training for government officials, including law enforcement officials, in how to recognize, investigate and prosecute instances of trafficking? Yes.
18. Does the government extradite persons who are charged with trafficking in other countries? Please provide numbers. Yes. There were 4 extraditions to Israel from the Czech Republic and from Ukraine.
- a. Does the government extradite its own nationals charged with such offenses? No
 - b. If not, is the government prohibited by law from extraditing its own nationals? No
 - c. If so, are those laws being modified to permit the extradition of its own nationals? Not that we know of.
19. Is there any evidence of government involvement in or tolerance of trafficking, on a local or institutional level?
- a. If so, please provide details, including any prosecutions, convictions and sentences.

We are aware of only one case that was published in the media on February 21, 2007. An article by Ami Ben David in the Ma'ariv daily newspaper stated: "A police officer in the Immigration Police, formerly an officer in the Police Unit that detects national and international crime organizations, was arrested. Officer Tiran Zalai was accused of 'crossing the lines' and working with the criminal organization Hariri-Itam from Jaljulia. In addition to him, one more policeman and eight persons were arrested, some of them suspected in being high levels of the criminal organization. According to the suspicion, Officer Zalai is suspected in relation to 14 cases of severe crime when he was operating as an officer in the Police Unit for investigating criminal organizations, which include: passing intelligence information, giving information on investigations, alerting before police raids on brothels, receiving 'protection money' from brothels, including receiving sexual bribes and money." We have not yet verified the information as it was released only today.

b. If any government officials were involved in trafficking, what steps did the government take to end such participation?

20. Is there any sex tourism problem in Israel? If so, please provide details.

Not that we know of.

21. Has the government signed ratified and/or taken steps to implement the following international instruments?

a. ILO Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Yes

b. ILO Convention 29 and 105 on Forced or Compulsory Labor We do not have knowledge of this, as it is not relevant to our specific area of work.

c. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. Yes

d. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Conventional Against Transnational Organized Crime. Yes.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

22. Please report on government assistance to victims, such as providing temporary to permanent residency status, relief from deportation, shelter, and access to legal, medical and psychological services.

a. Are the services and facilities offered dedicated to helping victims of trafficking? Yes

b. Are all victims of trafficking are eligible? Only international trafficking for prostitution purposes

c. What is the number of victims placed in these facilities and/or using these services? 40 are placed in the shelter. 19 victims of international trafficking are taken care of by special programs run by the NGOs.

23. Does the government provide funding or other forms of support to foreign or domestic NGOs for services to victims? **No** If so, please provides details.
24. Do law enforcement and social service personnel have a formal system of identifying victims of trafficking among high-risk persons with whom they come in contacts? **Semi-formal training that needs improvement.**
25. Is there a referral process in place, when appropriate, to transfer victims detained, arrested or placed in protective custody by law enforcement authorities to NGOs that provide short- or long-term care? **No. The victims that are in the care of the NGOs were not referred there by a referral process**
26. How are victims treated by the government? **All victims of international trafficking for prostitution purposes are treated as victims.**
- Are the rights of victims respected, or are victims treated as criminals? **Victims' rights are usually respected.**
 - Are victims detained, jailed or deported? **If a victim is detected the authorities call the NGOs and with their recommendation the victim is given the choice to enter the shelter for a residence period of two weeks to see if she wants to file complaint against her traffickers or to be deported.**
 - If detained or jailed, for how long? **If the victim decides to be deported she is detained in a special center until deportation which takes place within two weeks at the most.**
 - Are victims fined? **No**
 - Are victims prosecuted for violations of other laws, such as those governing immigration or prosecution? **No**
27. Does the government encourage victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking? **Yes.**
28. May victims file civil suits or seek legal action against the traffickers? **Yes. Some cases are still in the process.**
- If so, are they successful? Please provide specifics.
 - Does anyone impede the victims' access to such legal redress? **No**
29. If a victim is a material witness in a court case against a former employer, is the victim permitted to obtain other employment or to leave the country pending trial proceedings? **International trafficking victims for prostitution purposes who are witnesses can stay in the shelter until the trial is over and an additional year.**
30. Is there a victim restitution program? **Not that we know of.**
31. What kind of protection does the government provide for victims and witnesses? **Shelter for international trafficking victims for prostitution purposes.**
- Does the government provide these protections in practice?
 - What type of shelter or services does the government provide? **The shelter for international trafficking victims for prostitution purposes provides protection and there are processes to evaluate dangerous**

- situations so that victims who have witnessed can remain in Israel (very few cases). There is no specific program to protect witnesses
- c. Does the government provide shelter or housing benefits to victims or other resources to aid the victims in rebuilding their lives? **No**
 - d. Where are child victims placed? (e.g. in shelters, foster-care, juvenile justice detention centers, or other situations) **In 2006 no child victims were found.**
32. Does the government provide any specialized training for government officials in recognizing trafficking? **yes**
- a. Does the government provide any specialized training in the provision of assistance to trafficked victims, including the special needs of trafficked children? **Yes, but only to those victims who are in the government shelter. The victims outside the shelter are helped only by the NGOs. There are no trafficked children that we are aware of.**
33. Does the government provide training or protections and assistance to its embassies and consulates in foreign countries that are destination or transit countries? **Yes**
- a. Does the government urge those embassies and consulates to develop ongoing relationships with NGOs that serve trafficked victims? **Yes**
34. Does the government provide assistance, such as medical aid, shelter or financial help, to its repatriated nationals (if any) who are victims of trafficking? **Israel is mainly a destination country. In 2006 there was known only one case of Israeli trafficking victims for prostitution purposes. We have no knowledge about the victim (if she returned or received any help).**
35. Which international organizations or NGOs work with trafficking victims in Israel? **The local NGOs that work with trafficking victims for prostitution purposes are: Machon Toda'a--Awareness Center, which is the representative of the INGO International Abolitionist Federation; Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center, the Hotline for Migrant Workers, which also works with trafficking victims who are migrant workers for purposes other than the sex industry.**
- a. What type of services do they provide? **Isha L'Isha and Hotline for Migrant Workers** operate a hotline for trafficking victims in the framework of their Choosing Freedom project; **Machon Toda'a** has been working since 2005 with foreign trafficking victims as well as local trafficking victims on the basis of a individual program for each victim based on the model of SAGE (the Norma Hotaling project in Israel) to integrate them into society.
 - b. What sort of cooperation do they receive from local authorities? **There is good cooperation with local authorities regarding international trafficking victims for prostitution purposes. Legal assistance and medical assistance for foreign victims who have an A/5 visa or are working are provided. In 2006, there was not yet any**

cooperation from local authorities regarding internal trafficking victims. Machon Toda'a is working with local authorities to process a national plan for this purpose.

Both Isha L'Isha and Machon Toda'a see a big problem with the local trafficking for prostitution purposes, because while the number of foreign trafficking victims was reduced drastically (only 20 known cases entered Israeli borders in 2006), the infrastructure of the sex industry remains unaltered. Nowadays, there is no governmental agency working on the issue of local prostitution. These victims do not have a place to turn to if they wish to escape the prostitution cycle, such as the shelter for foreign trafficking victims.

Index 1:

Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (Legislative Amendments) Law, 5766 - 2006

1. Amendment of the Penal Law
In the Penal Law, 5737 - 1977²² –
 - (1) The end of section 15(b), beginning with the word "bigamy", shall be replaced by "one of these, and it is committed by a person who was a citizen of Israel at the time of the commission of the offense:
 - (1) bigamy according to section 176;
 - (2) an offense according to Article 10 of Chapter 8 that was committed on, or in connection with, a minor;
 - (3) conveying a person beyond the boundaries of the State according to section 370;
 - (4) Instigating a person to leave the State for purposes of prostitution or slavery according to section 376B;
 - (5) trafficking in persons according to section 377A.
 - (2) Section 203A is hereby repealed;
 - (3) In section 203B, , "202, 203 or 203A" shall be replaced by "202 or 203";

²² *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5737, p. 226; 5766, p. 230.

- (4) In section 368D(h), the definition "offense" shall be replaced by "offense" – one of these:
- (1) prostitution and obscenity offense according to sections 199, 201, 202, 203, 203B, 203C, 205A and 214(B1);
 - (2) an offense of endangering life and health according to section 337;
 - (3) a sexual offense according to sections 345, 346, 347, 347A, 348 and 351;
 - (4) an offense of abandonment or neglect according to sections 361 and 362;
 - (5) an offense of assault or abuse according to sections 368B and 368C;
 - (6) an offence of trafficking in persons according to section 377A";
- (5) In section 370 –
- (a) The headnote shall be replaced by "Conveying a Person Beyond the Boundaries of the State";
 - (b) after "beyond the boundaries of the State" shall be inserted "in which the said person is staying";
 - (c) "imprisonment for twenty years" shall be replaced by "ten years imprisonment ";
- (6) In section 374 –
- (a) in the headnote, "or a sexual offense" shall be replaced by "Grievous";
 - (b) "grievous, to prohibited sexual contact or a life of prostitution" shall be replaced by "grievous";
- (7) After section 374 shall be added:
- "374A. Abducting for Purposes of Trafficking in Persons

One who abducts a person for one of the purposes set forth in section 377A(a) or in order to place the person in one of the dangers set forth in the said section shall be liable to twenty years imprisonment ."

(8) After section 375 shall be added:

"375A. Holding a Person under Conditions of Slavery

(a) Anyone holding a person under conditions of slavery for the purposes of work or services, including sex services - is liable to sixteen years imprisonment.

(b) Where an offense according to subsection (a) is committed against a minor, the offender is liable to twenty years imprisonment.

(c) In this article, "slavery" means a situation under which powers generally exercised towards property are exercised over a person; in this matter, substantive control over the life of a person or denial of his liberty shall be deemed use of powers as stated."

(9) Section 376 shall be replaced by the following:

"376. Forced Labor

Anyone who unlawfully forces a person to work, by using force or other means of pressure or by threat of one of these, or by consent elicited by means of fraud, whether or not for consideration, shall be liable to seven years imprisonment."

(10) In section 376A, "imprisonment for one year" shall be replaced by " three years imprisonment ; a person who so acts for one of the purposes set forth in section 377A(a) or by so doing places the person in one of the dangers set forth in the said section shall be liable to five years imprisonment";

(11) After section 376A shall be added:

376B Causing a Person to Leave A State for Purposes of Prostitution or Slavery

(a) Anyone who causes another person to leave the State in which he lives for purposes of engaging the person

in prostitution or holding that person under conditions of slavery shall be liable to ten years imprisonment;

- (b) Where an offense according to subsection (a) is committed against a minor, the offender is liable to fifteen years imprisonment."

(12) After section 377, before the heading "Article 8: Assault" shall be inserted:

377A. Trafficking in Persons

Anyone who carries on a transaction in a person for one of the following purposes or in so acting places the person in danger of one of the following, shall be liable to sixteen years imprisonment:

- (1) removing an organ from the person's body;
 - (2) giving birth to a child and taking the child away;
 - (3) subjecting the person to slavery;
 - (4) subjecting the person to forced labor;
 - (5) instigating the person to commit an act of prostitution;
 - (6) instigating the person to take part in an obscene publication or obscene display;
 - (7) committing a sexual offense against the person.
- (b) Where an offense according to subsection (a) is committed against a minor, the offender is liable to twenty years imprisonment.
 - (c) The middleman in trafficking in a person as stated in subsection (a), whether or not for consideration, shall be considered as the trafficker of the said person.
 - (d) In this section, "transaction in a person" means selling or buying a person or carrying out another transaction in a person, whether or not for consideration.

377B. Minimal Punishment for the Offense of Holding a Person under Conditions of Slavery and Trafficking in Persons

- (a) Where a person is convicted of an offense according to section 375A or 377A, the sentence imposed shall not be less than one-quarter of the maximum sentence set forth for the said offense, unless the court has decided, for special reasons that shall be recorded, to impose a more lenient sentence.
- (b) A sentence of imprisonment according to subsection (a) shall not be wholly suspended, unless there are no special reasons.

377C. Obligation to Detail Reasons for not Awarding a Compensation
Where a person is convicted of an offense according to section 375A or 377A, and the court does not award compensatory damages according to section 77, the court shall specify in its judgment the reasons for the failure to order compensation as stated.

377D. Forfeiture

- (a) In this section and in section 377E –
 - "Combating Criminal Organizations Law" means the Combating Criminal Organizations Law, 5763 – 2003²³;
 - "victim of an offense" means a person who is directly injured by an offense and a family member of a person who died as a result of the offense;
 - "offense" means the offense of holding under conditions of slavery according to section 375A and the offense of trafficking in persons according to section 377A;
 - "property" and "property related to an offense" have the same meaning as in the Combating Criminal Organizations Law.
- (b) The provisions of sections 5 to 33 of the Combating Criminal Organizations Law, except for sections 8, 14(2) and 31 of the said law, shall apply to the forfeiture of property related to an offense, as the case may be and *mutatis mutandis*.
- (c) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b), property that is subject to forfeiture according to the provisions of this part and also according to the provisions of the Combating

²³ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5763, p. 502.

Criminal Organizations Law or the Prohibition of Money Laundering Law, 5760 – 2000,²⁴ shall be forfeited according to the provisions of this Law, unless there are special reasons justifying that the forfeiture of the property not be carried out according to the provisions of this part.

- (d) The Minister of Justice, with the approval of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset, shall promulgate in regulations provisions regarding procedural rules in the matter of an application for a forfeiture order in a criminal or civil proceeding, proceedings for the hearing of objections to the forfeiture, application for steps to safeguard property, temporary relief, rehearing, appeal, and also provisions on the ways to effectuate the forfeiture, administer the assets and give notice to persons claiming right in the property.

377E. Special Fund

- (a) The decision of the court on forfeiture according to section 377D shall serve as a basis for the Administrator General to seize the forfeited property; property that has been forfeited, or the consideration thereof, shall be transferred to the Administrator General and deposited by him in a special fund that shall be administered in accordance with the regulations that shall be promulgated according to subsection (d) (in this section – the Fund).
- (b) A fine imposed by the court for an offense shall be deposited in the Fund.
- (c) Where a victim of an offense presents, to an entity determined by the Minister of Justice for this purpose, a judgment for compensation and shows that he has no

²⁴ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim*, p. 293.

reasonable possibility to realize all or part of the judgment, according to any law, the victim of the offense shall be paid from the Fund the compensation set forth in the judgment that has not been paid, all or part thereof; for the purposes of this section, "judgment" means a judgment that may no longer be appealed.

(d) The Minister of Justice, with the approval of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset, shall promulgate in regulations the methods of administering the Fund, the use to be made of the Fund's assets, and the manner of their distribution for these purposes:

- (1) rehabilitation, treatment, and protection of victims of an offense; for this purpose, there shall be allocated annually an amount not less than one half of the Fund's assets in one year;
- (2) payment of compensation awarded in a judgment to a victim of an offense, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c);
- (3) prevention of the commission of an offense;
- (4) carrying out the functions of law enforcement authorities in enforcing the provisions of this Law in respect to an offense."

(13) In section 431, at the beginning, "one year imprisonment" shall be replaced by "three years imprisonment".

2. Amendment of Procedure (Interrogation of Witnesses) Law

In the Amendment of Procedure (Examination of Witnesses) Law, 5718 – 1957²⁵ –

(1) In section 2B –

(a) In every place, the words "for the purpose of prostitution" shall be deleted;

(b) In subsection (e), the definition of "offense of trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution" shall be replaced by:

²⁵ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5718, p. 16; 5764, p. 532.

"offense of trafficking in persons" - the offense of trafficking in persons for one of the purposes set forth in paragraphs (5) to (7) in section 377A(a) of the Penal Law or which action places the person in one of the dangers set forth in the said paragraphs";

(2) In section 2C(c), the words "for the purpose of prostitution" shall be deleted;

(3) In the Schedule, in paragraph (a), the word "203A," shall be deleted, and after "351(a), (b), (c)(1) an (c)(2) shall be inserted "and the offense of trafficking in persons according to section 377A(a)(5)".

3. Amendment of the Legal Aid Law

In the Legal Aid Law, 5732 - 1972²⁶ (hereafter – the Legal Aid Law), in the Schedule, in paragraph 1, "section 203A" shall be replaced by "section 377A(a)(5)".

4. Legal Aid Law – Temporary Order

During the period from the date of publication of this law to 15 Elul 5768 (15 September 2008), paragraph 1 in the First Schedule to the Legal Aid Law shall be read in the wording of section 3 of this Law, as if instead of "section 377A(a)(5)" is stated "section 375A or 377A(a)".

5. Amendment of the Criminal Procedure Law [Consolidated Version], 5742 – 1982²⁷ –

(1) In section 62A(a), in the definition of "sexual offense or offense of violence", the word "203A," shall be deleted, and after "377 under aggravated circumstances" shall be inserted "offense of trafficking in persons according to section 377A(a)(5),";

(2) In section 117(b), "according to section 203A" shall be replaced by "according to section 377A".

6. Amendment of the Courts Law

In the Courts Law [Consolidated Version], 5744 – 1984²⁸ –

(1) In section 68(b), after paragraph (8), shall be inserted:

"(9) For purpose of protecting the matter of a complainant or a victim of an offense according to section 377A of the Penal Law, 5737 – 1977.²⁹"

(2) In section 70(c), "sections 345 to 358, section 360 and sections 208 to 214" shall be replaced by "sections 208, 214, 345 to 352 and 377A".

7. Amendment of the Legal Assistance between States Law

In the Legal Assistance between States Law, 5758 – 1998, in the Second Schedule –

(1) In paragraph C2, at the beginning, the words "5737 – 1977" shall be deleted;

²⁶ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5732, p. 95; 5765, p. 422.

²⁷ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5742, p. 43; 5766, p. 391.

²⁸ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5744, p. 198; 5766, p. 385.

²⁹ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5737, p. 226; 5765, p...

- (2) After paragraph i shall be added:
 "j. Offenses according to sections 375A and 377A of the Penal Law."
8. Amendment of the Prohibition of Money Laundering Law
 In the Prohibition of Money Laundering Law, 5760 – 2000,³⁰ in paragraph (3) of the First Schedule, the word "203A," shall be deleted.
9. Amendment of the Rights of Victims of an Offense Law
 In the Rights of Victims of an Offense Law, 5761 – 2001 -³¹
 (1) In the First Schedule, in the part under the heading "Offenses in the Penal Law"–
 (a) In paragraph 2, the word "203A," shall be deleted;
 (b) In paragraph 7, "375, 376 and 377" shall be replaced by "374A, 375, 375A, 376, 376B, 377 and 377A";
 (2) In part 1, paragraph 6 of the First Schedule A, "in paragraph 7, except according to section 376" shall be replaced by "in paragraph 7".
10. Amendment of the Restriction on Use of a Place for Purposes of Preventing Commission of Offenses Law
 In the Restriction on Use of a Place for Purposes of Preventing Commission of Offenses Law, 5765 – 2005,³² in section 1, in the definition "offense," in paragraph (3), "to engage in prostitution according to section 203A" shall be replaced by "according to section 377A(a)(5)".

Index 2:

Subject of discussion: Defending Victims of Trafficking - medical treatment for women who stay outside the shelter, and finding an arrangement for women who stay in the shelter with their children

In the framework of discussions by the team charged with establishing a national program to fight against trafficking in women for the sex industry, regarding the subject of defending the trafficking victims, we would like to raise the position of Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center and the Hotline for Foreign Workers.

³⁰ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5760, p. 293; 5765, p. 913.

³¹ *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5761, p. 183; 5766, p. 244.

³² *Sefer Ha-Chukkim* 5765, p. 426.

Together, and with The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, these two organizations run a project called "Choosing Freedom", which includes an **emergency hotline for trafficking victims**. The organizations share two subjects: providing medical treatment to trafficking victims who are not in the Ma'agan government shelter and finding an arrangement which can provide a proper solution for children who stay in the shelter.

Medical treatment for women who stay out of the shelter

In the framework of the NGO Choosing Freedom project, there are currently 14 trafficking victims who do not stay in the shelter for various reasons. Some are not in the shelter because they have children living with them, others are drug addicts, arrived in Israel before the establishment of the shelter, or live with a partner. These women have been provided with medical assistance by the Choosing Freedom project. They have various medical problems and require medical aid in gynecology, psychiatry, oncology, et cetera. It would be appropriate for these women to receive medical aid as traffic victims, regardless of whether they reside in the shelter or not. Currently, victims of trafficking who do not stay in the shelter, even if they have visas to be in Israel, are not entitled to medical treatment unless they work and their employer has provided them with medical insurance. The visa itself does not provide the privilege of the "Health Basket", but allows work permission, and according to the obligations of the employer, the woman should be provided with medical coverage. Without the mentioned conditions the victims remain without any medical care, even when suffering from minor ailments such as a cold. According to our experience, many of the employers do not care about colds or about HIV problems. Women who try to claim their rights to medical treatment usually get fired.

Our proposed solutions for this problem are:

- Changing the visa given to trafficking victims, so that it will provide the woman with medical rights (like the a/5 visa). Thus victims will not be dependent upon their employers for medical treatment.

- Making an arrangement with HMOs or hospitals in Israel for medical care for trafficking victims. Thus the women could get medical treatment near their residence.
- Using the resources of the state shelter--which is not operating at full capacity - to expand the group of women in its care, so that all trafficking victims are able to get medical aid whether or not they are residents in the shelter.

Presently the project has to find solutions for various medical treatments, with the help of NGOs who work in Israel, such as Physicians for Human Rights, and seeking various institutes that can assist in this subject. Healthcare and available medical treatment is a basic right in the State of Israel, which derives from the value of human life. It is unreasonable that this issue will not be solved and dismissed as insignificant. We talk of cases which cannot be postponed, and no excuse is acceptable when life is at stake.

Children in the Ma'agan shelter

Presently there are six children residing in the shelter, aged 1-3 approximately. They were all born in Israel to Israeli fathers. The shelter, with all its good will, is not suitable for the absorption of children. There is no kindergarten there nor any space suitable for groups of children. There are no pedagogy professionals on site who are trained for taking care of preschoolers. Furthermore, no arrangements exist with local kindergartens or daycare centers to take care of the children during the day.

The primary purpose of staying in the shelter is rehabilitation. There is no doubt that raising her child can definitely assist the woman to regain her strength. Yet the fact that the women need to remain in the shelter all day with their children hinders them from integrating into the job force, saving money for her and her children's future, and recognizing their abilities as breadwinners. Last year a trafficking victim staying in a shelter applied through legal aid for a year extension to her visa, claiming that the year which followed her testimony was totally

dedicated to taking care of her children. She felt that she had missed any opportunities to work or take time for her rehabilitation. Her application was denied.

The issue should be examined also from the child's point of view. There is no doubt that the child belongs with his or her mother. However, the shelter environment is not adjusted for preschoolers, both for safety reasons and the variety of activities it can offer. During the past year, the Choosing Freedom project has encountered several traffic victims caring for their children, who requested a place in the shelter. However, their requests could not be granted due to the fact that the shelter has no resources for additional children. The shelter's doors would have been opened if the shelter had the capacity for children's absorption or if the women had no children to take care of.

According to our perspective, a system dedicated to taking care of women should take into account a situation where children might be added to the equation. As known, shelters for battered women include facilities to care for children within the shelter or the children are sent to day care centers such as those run by the WIZO organization, and the mothers are not required to pay. In addition, the budget for these children exceeds the budget for the women. According to the instructions of the Ministry of Welfare, shelters for battered women are not ready to absorb trafficking victims who stay in Israel without visas nor to provide medical insurance for them. Our unfortunate experience indicates that many trafficking victims who give birth to children in Israel have experience with a violent or abusive mate. In this situation if the woman wants to escape from him, she loses out both ways. She cannot be absorbed in the shelter for trafficking victims nor in a shelter for battered women. This situation is unbearable, and it is obvious that rehabilitation should be provided for women who take care of children as well.

Reality forces us to make changes and find solutions which were not taken into consideration when the shelter was established. Solutions must be provided both for traffic victims who take care of children while trying to rehabilitate themselves and for their children who need proper environments.

Sincerely yours,

Rita Chaikin, Anti-Trafficking Project Coordinator, Isha L'Isha–Haifa Feminist Center

Adi Willinger, Lawyer, Hotline for Migrant Workers

Index 3:

1. Forced Marriages:

Document issued by Isha L'Isha regarding the issue of forced marriages:

Recently, the Ministry of the Interior and the police located several isolated instances of procurers, or suspected procurers, who filed requests for family reunification with women from the former Soviet Union, in which it is suspected that the purpose is to bring them to Israel for prostitution. These suspicions arise in cases with problematic circumstances, including very short or almost non-existent relationships, a very significant age difference, past arrests for prostitution/procuring, etc.

The State of Israel is aware of approximately 4-5 such cases which raise suspicions of forced marriages for the purpose of prostitution. As mentioned above, generally, these cases involved suspicions regarding the true nature of requests by Israelis from the former Soviet Union for visas for their alleged wives.

In suspicious cases, the Ministry of the Interior held specific hearings during which the Israeli requesting party was interrogated in order to learn about the nature of the relations and the true nature of the request. Simultaneously, the Israeli consul in the women's country of origin held hearings for the women. In this way, the information could be correlated and conclusions reached.

These cases require careful handling in order to distinguish between fictitious and bona fide marriages, especially in view of the fact that the right to marry is viewed as a basic human right. In addition, on a practical level, it is difficult to collect persuasive evidence to prove the nature of the relationship.

In one known case (regarding which a petition was filed to the Supreme Court by the husband - HCJ 2290/06, *A. K. v. the Ministry of the Interior*), it was decided to allow the woman (who was previously removed from Israel, as she was an illegal

entrant who had engaged in prostitution) a temporary visa to enter Israel to be with her husband (who, by his own admission in the hearing, ran a place that was used routinely for the purpose of prostitution), and to hold a joint hearing for the couple to decide as to the future of their request. In view of this concession, for the present the husband's court petition was cancelled.

Another petition was filed to the Supreme Court regarding the family reunification of an Israeli citizen and a citizen of Uzbekistan, after their request was denied. The denial of the request by Israeli authorities was a result of the vigilance of the Israeli consul in Uzbekistan who suspected the marriage was a guise for trafficking. However, as there was no supporting evidence, it was not possible to prove the suspicion and the request was eventually approved.

Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center, an NGO working in Haifa, the northern part of Israel, reported encountering about 15-20 cases of forced marriage, e.g., cases where the procurer brought the woman under the pretence of marriage, to engage in prostitution. This NGO is of the opinion that there are three categories which fit this description, but it is doubtful if all these categories can be classified as forced marriage for the purpose of trafficking:

1. The woman is brought to Israel to work in prostitution, entering Israel through the *Entry to Israel Law, 1952*, that allows the non-Jewish spouse of a Jewish man of Israeli citizenship to immigrate to Israel. The woman is trafficked into prostitution; works in a brothel until she pays back her "debt".
2. "Mail-order brides" – Women from poor countries who marry Israeli men, often disabled, who are interested in them as service providers. The women consent in the hopes that this will enable them to break the cycle of poverty. This is not strictly "forced marriage" and it is doubtful if it can be classified as trafficking, although there are clear inequalities between the partners. These cases raise difficult questions relating to the degree of choice in relations in which one party marries because of his/her low economic status.
3. A relationship between a former trafficking victim, who has no legal status in Israel, and an Israeli citizen. In many cases Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center found that the husband eventually becomes violent and the woman finds herself and her children in a very problematic situation. This too, is not strictly "forced marriage", as detailed above.

Nowadays, as the battle against trafficking has become part of Israel's agenda, there is great progress and the span of the phenomena has decreased. In 2004, a state-run shelter for trafficking victims - the first and to date, only, of its kind - was established in Israel. With time the shelter's staff became more attentive and aware of the unique needs of the women staying in it. Currently, the shelter accepts not only women who testify in trafficking cases, but also women who are

reluctant to do so, as the purpose of the shelter is to provide the victims with initial assistance. Afterwards the women are given a chance to decide by themselves whether they are willing to cooperate with the authorities. Today's procedure states that the woman should be directly sent to the shelter, upon identification by the Immigration Police as a trafficking victim, and therefore not be transferred to an imprisonment facility.

In addition, victims of trafficking have begun to get work-visas during the period of their court testimony, and they may ask for a prolongation of the visa for up to a year after they finish giving their testimony. Legal assistance is provided by the State for free, and it includes a civil prosecution against the trafficker for personal distress and for not paying all his debts to the woman.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health has to provide the women in the shelter with medical insurance. Sometimes we manage to get free medical aid also for women who do not stay at the shelter, but remained in Israel for humanitarian reasons.