



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP**

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**NEWS REPORT**

<b>Headline</b>	<b>Women the new pimps in human trafficking trade</b>
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Women are emerging as the pimps of the global trade in humans with a third of countries reporting more female traffickers than male, a United Nations study shows.

The first international report into the scope of human trafficking, published yesterday, found a disproportionate number of female perpetrators, more than in any other crime, selling other women into slavery in countries including Australia. With demand for cheap goods and services rising with the fall of the world economy, experts fear labour exploitation will grow.

Sex slavery accounts for 79 per cent of all human trafficking, most victims being women and girls, says the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's *Global Report On Trafficking In Persons*. It used data from 155 countries to establish patterns in trafficking and what individual nations were doing to fight it.

The office's executive director, Antonio Maria Costa, was alarmed by cases in which victims went on to become ringleaders in the trade. "We need to understand the psychological, financial and coercive reasons why women recruit other women into slavery," he said.

After sex, the second most common trade was in forced labour. These victims were harder to identify than sex slaves, whose work was highly visible and concentrated in cities and along major roads, the report said. By contrast, forced labourers worked in mines, factories and in private homes as domestic slaves. "Their numbers will surely swell as the economic crisis deepens the pool of potential victims," Mr Costa said.

The view was echoed by Jennifer Burn, the director of the Anti-Slavery Project at the University of Technology, Sydney. She said Australia's visa system was open to exploitation. "We have a visa system built around the idea that we have a skills shortage," Professor Burn said. Trafficked people could arrive as students and temporary skilled workers, and more sophisticated methods of protecting and detecting these people were needed, she said. Increased public awareness of modern-day slavery was necessary to snuff out the demand for it, she said. Instances of trafficking were under-reported, and often victims did not identify as such. "They know they've been held in an exploitative and harsh work environment, but they don't put that into the legal definition of trafficking," Professor Burn said. Most reported cases were of women from Thailand, South Korea and China, she said.

In Australia, the UN report found eight people were convicted from the 34 charged with trafficking-related offences in the five years to 2008. According to the Department of Immigration, 17 trafficking victims had been granted three-year temporary witness protection visas. To date, none have qualified for a permanent version of that visa. No trafficked children had been detected since 2003, the department said.

Yesterday the Federal Government proposed new obligations for employers of temporary skilled overseas workers on 457 visas. These included market pay rates and co-operation with inspectors.

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