

Each Year 70,000 or 10% of the World's Human Traffic Cases Occur in Brazil

Contributed by Cristiane Ribeiro
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Four Brazilian NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) launched yesterday in Rio de Janeiro a campaign against human trafficking for sexual exploitation or slave labor.

According to a report issued last week by the United States Department of State, 70 thousand Brazilians are victims of human trafficking each year.

This corresponds to 10% of the cases of this kind of traffic worldwide.

The campaign launched at the Antônio Carlos Jobim International Airport, in Rio, is coordinated by the Web Project, in partnership with the National Secretariat of Justice.

According to Michele Guerardi, a lawyer who is part of the campaign, the target audience comprises young women between the ages of 22 and 25, the biggest victims of sexual exploitation.

Jéssica Oliveira, a dancer who is now 30 years old, says that she was recruited in 1998, when she was invited to dance in Spain and earn the equivalent of US\$ 812 (2 thousand reais) per month.

"The proposal was very good, and they paid for everything, from the passport to airfare and accomodations."

When she arrived in Madrid, she discovered that she had been duped.

"A woman told me and the other girls that we would have to do other things to pay them for what they had spent on us. We had no choice, and for two months we were practically held captive, obliged to serve various clients.

"Until I was able to call my mother here in Brazil, and she approached the recruiter's family, threatening to report everything to the Federal Police, if they didn't send me back. It was a very hard experience."

The campaign against human trafficking will continue until the end of this year, with the distribution of educational material warning people about the dangers that exist.

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