

Epidemic of Lolitas in Brazil. Girls as Young as 10 Led into Prostitution.

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Igarapava, in the interior of the Brazilian southeastern state of São Paulo, is the latest town to be included in a long list of São Paulo municipalities involved in child prostitution.

According to Brazil's Public Defense Ministry, several girls from Igarapava with ages ranging between 10 and 14 engaged in sex with businessmen from the area.

Ten of these girls presented their testimony and told authorities in detail how they were seduced and then taken to ranches and motels where they had sex with the cream of the local society.

One of the men, a 27-year-old executive was, caught with two girls, who ended up confessing that each one of them had received 30 reais (US\$ 13) to engage in sex with the young man.

It seems that the child sex abuse had been happening at least for a year. The first charges came in to the Tutelar Board, the organ in charge of children's well being, six months ago.

No investigation was made, however, until recently. The probe only started after more than 40 complaints had already been filed. The investigations started in earnest only after the director of a school became suspicious of the behavior of some of her students who started to come late to school and decided to ask help from the Public Defense department.

District Attorney Antonio Carlos Guimarães, in charge of the case, says that investigations have started to find out who is heading the recruitment of little girls for sex trysts.

A businessman had his preventive arrest ordered but he continues free, however, since no one can be arrested in Brazil this week unless caught in flagrante delicto due to the proximity of the Sunday referendum, which will decide if weapons can be traded legally in the country.

Charges of sexual exploitation of children in the interior of São Paulo started several months ago in the city of Porto Ferreira, close to Ribeirão Preto, in the northern region of the state.

Politicians and businessmen were among those charged with child sex abuse. Defendants have already been tried and convicted in this case, but São Paulo's Supreme Court lowered their terms in prison from 40 years or more to 12 years or less.

Prosecutors are also examining allegations of sexual exploitation of minors in Guaíra. In this case, the whole process is being done in camera proceeding and the details of the trial are not being made public.

Other São Paulo towns where the District Attorney has been investigating charges of sexual exploitation of children include Colina and Brodovski.

Eleven minors between the ages of 14 and 16 from the city of Santo Antônio da Alegria have already presented their testimony to the police on how they were seduced and then led to engage in sexual acts.

Santo Antônio da Alegria, in the border of Minas Gerais state is a little town with less than 6000 residents. It's a kind of place where everybody knows everybody. It seems like everybody knew about the sexual exploitation of their own kids.

Investigations revealed that girls from the rural area as young as 10 and not older than 15 were brought to a bar in the center of the town and there they had sexual encounters with farmers, businessmen and politicians. Each girl was paid 20 reais (US\$ 9) for sexual encounter.