

In Brazil Human Traffic Gets Help from Authorities

Contributed by Márcia Wonghon
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The Latin American Human Rights Institute (Iclei) and the government of Pernambuco are offering a course to train teachers and volunteers in ways to prevent human traffic.

The event that started yesterday will run from through tomorrow, October 27, in the Museum of the Northeastern Man.

The idea is to qualify information multipliers in communities to warn about the problem, which mostly affects women and children.

The participants will become acquainted with the recently released Code of Conduct for Human Traffic.

According to Diana Segov, who represents the Iclei, besides providing information it is necessary to implement government policies to promote better opportunities for employment and income.

She said that the groups that are most vulnerable to this illegal practice are young, poorly educated women who are inveigled by false promises of work and marriage abroad.

The Iclei is an international organization composed of various municipal governments for the defense of human rights,

Pernambuco was the first Brazilian state to implant an administrative organ to combat human traffic.

The service, which has been in operation for a year, has already received 60 toll-free telephone calls denouncing the practice of this type of crime.

The accusations were turned over to the Public Interest Defender's Office and the Federal Police.

International Women Trafficking

Earlier this year, Brazil's Ministry of Justice made a partial survey of lawsuits and investigations involving accusations of international trafficking of Brazilian women taken to Spain, Portugal, and Italy, among other countries, where they are victims of sexual exploitation. The survey covers 36 cases in various Brazilian states between 2000 and 2003.

Sociologist Marcos Colares, a consultant to the Ministry for the study, affirms that there is a lawsuit underway in Rio de Janeiro indicating the involvement of 45 civil servants.

They include federal, military, and civil police officers and employees at Customs, the international airport, and the Federal Revenue service, all accused of forging documents for the embarkation of women inveigled by international traffickers.

The investigations were conducted in secret and stemmed from denunciations of money-laundering. All of the suspects were suspended from their posts.

Another case that was investigated occurred in Fortaleza and involved a Spaniard, according to Colares.

A couple that was attempting to embark claimed they were traveling abroad with a child in order to buy her a trousseau.

The child, who was not the couple's daughter, had false documents that belonged to a child who was born and died in Goiânia, which is in another part of the country.

The diagnosis of international trafficking of women for purposes of sexual exploitation was done by the Ministry of Justice's Global Program to Combat Human Trafficking, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The program is designed to train federal police, prosecutors, judges, public defenders, and civil servants, as well as diplomats and employees of Brazilian embassies and consulates abroad.

They learn how to identify this kind of traffic, which grows every day and is already the second most profitable type of illegal activity in the world, responsible for around US\$ 9 billion annually.

Human traffic has already surpassed the number of cases of arms smuggling and loses out only to drug trafficking.

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