

Brazil Finds 1,222 Locations Along Highways Offering Child Sex

Contributed by Elma Lia Nascimento
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Brazil's Federal Highway Patrol have found out, in one year, 1,222 places in federal roads around the country that offer minors as prostitutes. Most of these whores are located in gas stations, which also serve as parking lots for truck drivers.

According to authorities the majority of these places, 190 of them, are in the state of Minas Gerais, in the Brazilian Southeast. Other states with a great incidence of children prostituting themselves on the highways are Paraná, where 105 locations were discovered and Minas Gerais with 101 spots.

Agents of the Juvenile Court and the Guardianship Council of Uberaba, in Minas Gerais, conducted Tuesday, November 28, at dawn, a blitz along BR-050, the highway that links Minas to São Paulo, looking for sex exploitation of children and teenagers.

The team also visited roadside motels knocking on doors and asking for documentation. Minors or suspects of being a minor were taken by the agents.

One of the girls caught by the operation told that she was 15 and had been working as a prostitute since she was 11. She also said that she had been brought by her own aunt into prostitution.

The agents also visited nightclubs spreading their message that exploiting kids sexually is a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison. As part of the campaign the workers affixed posters and handed out leaflets condemning and warning against sex with a child.

"We approach people and tell them that there is a program to help the family and the child," says psychologist Fabiana Silva who works for the Minas Gerais's Juvenile Court.

Brazil's Justice Department has informed that starting in mid 2007 it will be using a program developed by Microsoft and the Canadian government, which is called Child Exploitation Tracking System (CETS). The application will allow the authorities to locate messages and emails of people trying to sexually prey on children.

The new system will be installed in Brazilian capital Brasília, in the Federal Police's Human Rights Division. Justice Department's workers are already being trained to use the program. In a second phase the system will be adopted by all police districts in the country and even by the Armed Forces.

The Brazilian Congress has been considering a law that would require every Internet surfer to have to prove his own identity with address, phone number and social security before he can send an email, post a message or chat online.

The Brazilian police would love to have a weapon to nab not only child sex offenders but also all kinds of pornography and of hate speech, including racism and anti-semitism and promotion of illegal activities like drugs.