

241 Routes Feed Brazil's Women and Minors Sex Slavery Trade

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Human trafficking, one of the modern forms of slavery, victimizes close to 2.5 million people around the world. Although there is no national statistic in Brazil, according to educated guesses, the majority of those affected - about 70% - are women and youth of African descent.

The principal victims, women and minors with falsified documents, are normally lured into sexual exploitation or slave labor.

According to data from the Research on the Trafficking of Women, Children, and Youth for the End of Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Brazil (Pestraf), 241 human trafficking routes pass through Brazil: 110 routes of internal trafficking (78 inter-state routes and 32 inter-municipal routes) and 131 international trafficking routes.

The inter-state and inter-municipal routes are used for connections with the borders of South America, especially in the trafficking of youth and children, who later leave the region in planes, ships, or small boats.

The country which receives the most Brazilians is Spain - between the two countries there are 32 trafficking routes. The criminal organization "Iberian Connection", which has numerous connections including one with the Russian Mafia, is responsible for the majority of transports to the European country.

After Spain, the countries which have the most trafficking routes with Brazil are: Holland (11), Venezuela (10), Italy (9), Portugal (8), Paraguay (7), Switzerland (6), USA (5), Germany (5), Suriname (5). The lack of a work force and the social construction of inferiority are, according to Pestraf, the principal reasons that women are victims of this kind of violence.

The profile of these women shows that they normally work in domestic services or in shops (store clerk, waitress), are poorly paid, do not have workers rights or guarantees. They come, for the most part, from the poorer classes, have low levels of education, and live in the urban peripheries, which include a lack of sanitation.

The youth come from cities of low socio-economic development in the rural areas of the country. Many have already been victims of intra-family violence (sexual abuse, rape, seduction, negligence).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the victims of human trafficking - men and women of all ages - are from 127 different nationalities, in 137 countries, and Brazil is one source of victims.

The organization says that between 600 and 800 thousand people are still trafficked through international borders each year.

The crimes committed by agents of international human trafficking (trafficking, activities and goods produced by the victims) generate US\$ 32 billion per year and is the third largest illegal activity in the world, behind the trafficking of drugs and arms. It is, however, the one which is growing the most.

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