

People are mainly trafficked and enslaved as sex workers but also as forced labourers, child brides and as soldiers. This is fact.

Of the 600-800'000 people smuggled over international borders annually, 75% are used for sex trafficking. So we here at 'STOP' thought, wow Nelly, not while we're alive!

Being trafficked to work in the sex industry is a catch 22 situation. Here is one of the many scenarios;

- You are poor and uneducated.
- The only commodity your family has left to sell for food is...you.
- You are enslaved and forced to work as a prostitute, but it is better than dying of hunger. Besides, they'll probably kill me if I try escape.
- You can't cope with being a prostitute, but luckily there are ample substances available to help you handle the barrage of customers you are forced to sleep with everyday.
- You start using the little money you receive to support your ever increasing drug habit.
- You want out... but now you have no money... you already spent it on drugs. So you keep working to make more money.
- In other words, finding yourself between the devil and the deep blue sea.

After some thinking, heavy discussion and debating we came to an obvious conclusion that the roots of trafficking lie in poverty, broken down family values, the lack of education and, of course, the demand for prostitutes. [Link](#)

Why do we say this? Well, according to the IOM (International Organization for Migration), 90% of victims trafficked as sex slaves experienced domestic violence before they were trafficked. [Link](#)

Now when it comes to human rights we are stalwarts of the cause, and we reckon that trafficked victims have it worse off than any other human being on earth.

The human rights of these individuals are non-existent from the word go. The victims are not only bombarded with inhumane treatment, but they are also smuggled into these foreign countries by Traffickers and then prosecuted by authorities due to their illegal immigrant status. They also find themselves in the prostitution industry which is, more often than not, illegal. That's a quadruple whammy!

So basically women who are trafficked to South Africa and forced to work as prostitutes are, not only severely mistreated by those horribly bad people who "deal in people", but also treated like criminals by authorities who are supposed to protect them. [Link](#)

Now if you thought that this was bad, it gets even worse. Even if these women manage to escape from their captors, most shelters for battered women require the woman to produce a South African Identification document before being allowed access to care and protection. That makes that place between the devil and the deep blue sea their only option. [Link](#)

These circumstances just keep them stuck in a vicious circle that eats them from the inside-out, as well as, from the outside-in!

Now if you still think that our cause is a bit overrated we'd really like to put ourselves in your shoes.

We have to accept that there are women who are dependant on prostitution to put food on the table for their children, but surely you must realise that the sad fact of the matter is that prostitution is, more often than not, degrading, unhealthy, abusive and sometimes forced upon them. [Link](#)

You may, or may not, have heard some geeky guy at your office tell you at the water fountain that he read, in a scientific study in the *Journal of Trauma Practice*, that 89% of women in prostitution want to escape but have no other options for survival. Yeah right, you say, why don't you go finish your Dungeons and Dragons adventure and leave me out of it! [Link](#)

You also probably may have heard of the many victims' stories which have a hazy, surreal quality of a nightmare, going beyond the reach of fiction. Even though at this point we thought, "enough is enough dammit", you could easily have shrugged it off as a case of them merely watching too much violent television, right?!! [Link](#)

It's funny to be reminded that South Africa's Saartjie Baartman was the first casualty of Human Trafficking, ending up dying alone and abused in a foreign country. How did we miss that the first time around? [Link](#)

Through delicate reasoning you have hopefully by now concluded that prostitution violates the right of that person to enjoy the highest standard of physical and mental health; because violence, disease, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and the risk of HIV-Aids constantly stalks them. We agree that women and girls in prostitution are at a constant grave risk, militating against a common and healthy sense of relationship with their own bodies because of the environment they function in. That's reasoning 101. [Link](#)

You also probably heard somewhere about those trafficked Malawian girls from the brothel in the Netherlands who were forcefully branded on their torso with the words; "Sex Club", but it was so long ago you can't remember if it was in a movie, or a joke someone told at a party. [Link](#)

Perhaps you already knew that the average age of entry into prostitution is 14 years of age. That's not a bad age to start selling your body I mean, at the least, you've most probably reached puberty by then. [Link](#)

Maybe you're fine with prostitutes being referred to as employees in the sex industry where orgasms are now, presumably, consumer products and pimps are 'brief sexual liaison coordinators'. I mean, come on, there aren't any overweight people either, they're merely horizontally enhanced. [Link](#)

We're pretty sure we might hear a little murmur from you when you hear that the mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, admits that the policy of legalisation of prostitution has been a failure and that he is in the process of instituting a reversal. You probably felt sorry for the Dutch people when Cohen stated that organised crime dominated the industry in which sex trafficking, exploitation, drug abuse and money laundering was rife. [Link](#)

Perhaps you would have merely considered yourself one of the fortunate parents who didn't discover a brothel in the same building as their child care centre, but did not have any legal avenues to stop them because prostitution was legalised in the state of Victoria, Australia. [Link](#)

We are really curious as to what you think about the fact that no country has managed to break the link between prostitution, crime, drugs and violence. [Link](#)

Then there is that ridiculous little survey that was done on prostitutes in the US with the coalition against women in trafficking that found that: 47% of prostitutes said men wanted sex without a condom, 73% said men offered to pay more for sex without a condom and 45% said they were abused if they insisted on condoms. But then again, it's actually really none of your business right? [Link](#)

You most likely thought that it was a bit harsh that 30% of women in prostitution thought that they might be killed by one of their customers. [Link](#)

Do you feel that you'd like to perhaps meet one of the Prostitutes in Hillbrow South Africa, who is amongst the 70% with HIV-Aids but just doesn't care about it, and ask her, "WHY ON EARTH DON'T YOU CARE?". [Link](#)

Now when it gets to *the children* things change a bit don't they? Surely you think that it is a travesty that there are around 14 300 Aids orphans wandering the 20km stretch between Ladybrand in South Africa and Maseru in Lesotho, who are easy prey for abuse. We also asked ourselves, "Why doesn't the Lesotho government do something about it, they're only children!". [Link](#)

One thing you can at least be sure about is that legalising the sex trade will bring in money for the government, who, if prostitution is legalised, will become the main Pimp daddy. But then again you

must have smirked when you heard that Germany legalised prostitution to be able to tax the industry, but felt a little bit disappointed when their government lost over €2 Billion in unpaid tax revenue due to pimps and traffickers not being the most loyal taxpayers around. [Link](#)

Here it is. You might seriously think that it must be extremely awkward to be amongst the 24 000, of Amsterdam's 30 000 strong, sex worker's who are from another country simply because that's culturally a bit over diversified for you. [Link](#)

Now if you were thinking that being in jail was depressing; incarcerated women have a rate of depression of 10%, whilst depressed sex workers' rate between 64-70%. But how could that be, they always look so happy and....willing?? [Link](#)

Now you're thinking, why would anybody be in the sex industry if they found that 79% of them said they were there due to a degree of force. Really?!! That's just, stupid. [Link](#)

Now we're sure that you agreed wholeheartedly when Australia's Victoria province decided to decriminalise prostitution so that those working in the sex industry could have a voice and rights. Did you perhaps feel a bit ashamed when you heard that there were more than 1800 children being used in the commercial sex trade in that province? [Link](#)

Maybe you felt liberated when prostitution was legalised in the Netherlands to stop child prostitution, and thought that it was a grand idea, but wanted to tear your hair out later due to the fact that between 1996 and 2001 this figure went from 4000 to 15 000 of which 5000 of these children were trafficked? [Link](#)

Then again, perhaps we were a little naïve to think that, as little as, one smuggled woman or child used as a sex worker, is already one too many?

Now we want you to think and think hard. Out of the box.

South Africa, due to it's pockets of extreme wealth, first class financial infrastructures, economic growth, transportation improvements and the ever increasing influence of organised crime; South Africa is in the (un)fortunate position that it qualifies (and is already used) as a primary destination for victims of Human Trafficking. [Link](#)

Perhaps we, here at STOP, are completely off the ball by thinking that human trafficking is ALREADY a problem in South Africa after finding out that a Port Elizabeth-based organisation, that deals with victims of rape and domestic violence, sees 100-200 cases a month of which between 10-20% are trafficked victims. [Link](#)

It is blatantly clear that what is required, apart from more and better exit programmes for prostitutes, is the will to help women out of, what amounts to, a form of gender based violence. [Link](#)

Fact of the matter is that we've got a couple of big issues that we, here at STOP, are struggling to deal with. If the demand for sex with prostitutes was not there, well then there most probably wouldn't be such a thing as forced prostitution. And we (as well as you reading this) are expected to be the educated ones. The ones who look after and protect those who can't do so for themselves. [Link](#)

Now call us a bit presumptuous but we do not believe that men should have a legitimised sense of entitlement to demand sex anytime, any way they want it, from mostly minority and poverty stricken women. [Link](#)

As long as there is an attitude that it is fine to sexually abuse someone else's daughter or son, we are not really making headway towards the healthy society that we would, I'm sure, all like to live in.

We're also saying that it is impossible to protect someone whose source of income exposes them to the likelihood of being raped, on average, once a week. [Link](#)

SO in a nutshell, what we're saying is:

We will not be the stooges of the national and international prostitution industry where women and children are regarded as commodities for trade. And so begins our discussion...