

Experts Encourage Action Against Sex Trafficking

By Catherine Cannon
Washington
15 May 2009

[Cannon report - Download \(WM\)](#) 

[Cannon report - Watch \(WM\)](#) 



Video clip of human trafficking victims

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime says the most common form of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation. In a recent report on modern slavery, the UN says that about 79 percent of people enslaved each year are coerced into prostitution. Some experts believe the best solution is to focus on decreasing the demand.

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is a growing problem worldwide, according to experts. The victims are mostly women and girls.

In conflict zones in eastern Africa, many women have been abducted for sex.

But the United Nations reports 20 percent of all trafficking victims are children. Some are forced to be child soldiers.

Are men driving problem?

Swanee Hunt is a former US diplomat and an expert on the trafficking of women and girls.

"This is a travesty and this policy community is not recognizing it, and we need to be involved," Hunt said.

At a panel discussion recently in Washington, Hunt said the slave trade is the fastest growing criminal industry and it will surpass the drug trade in less than five years.

Journalist Victor Malarek said men are driving the enslavement for sex.

"Men hold the key to putting the breaks on this sexual insanity because unlike the millions of women entrapped in the flesh-trade, men have a choice," he said.

Some victims just trying to survive

In regions of extreme poverty, many women become trafficking victims as a means of survival, according to experts.

Mark Lagon, the director of a non profit group that advocates against human trafficking, says the economic crisis could make the problem worse.

"I do think the vulnerability of people to become trafficking victims remains intense because

economic desperation, while not the singular cause of human trafficking, is an important one," Lagon said.

Awareness campaign encouraged

Lagon said more needs to be done to raise awareness, specifically among young boys.

"We just need to think that the degradation of women, to think of them as objects, objects think about it, something which might be worthy of being sold, as opposed to treating them like human beings not eligible for sale, is a place to begin," he said.

Lagon hopes people who previously were involved in the sex trade will speak out and draw attention to the issue around the world.

Print