



Uganda - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 28 July 2010

Information regarding sex trafficking of women/girls in Uganda.

The June 2010 *United States Department of State* Trafficking in Persons Report for Uganda, states:

“Uganda is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to trafficking in persons, specifically forced labor and forced prostitution. Ugandan children are exploited in conditions of forced labor within the country in the fishing, agricultural, and domestic service sectors, as well as for commercial sexual exploitation; they are also taken to East African and European countries for the same purposes. Karamojong women and children in particular are subject to domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, cattle herding, and begging. Security companies and employment agencies in Kampala recruit Ugandans to migrate and work as security guards and domestic servants in Iraq, where sometimes their travel documents and pay have been withheld as a means to obtain and maintain their compelled labor; labor trafficking victims repatriated from Iraq in 2009 reported harsh working conditions, physical and sexual abuse, withholding of food, and being confined to their employer's residence.” (United States Department of State (14 June 2010) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010 – Uganda*)

The April 2010 *Freedom House* Countries at the Crossroads report for Uganda, under the heading ‘Civil Liberties’, notes:

“Human trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation, both inside the country and to foreign states, remains a problem. The government has organized a Family and Child Protection Unit to improve the police force's capacity to recognize victims, but there are as yet no measures of its success.” (Freedom House (6 April 2010) *Uganda: Countries at the Crossroads 2010*)

Under the heading ‘Introduction’, page 10 of an April 2010 *Amnesty International* report on violence towards women in Uganda, it is noted:

“Violence against women and girls remains widespread in most parts of Uganda. Forms of violence include rape, domestic violence, and forced and early marriages. An estimated two thirds of Ugandan households have experienced domestic violence, with women being four times more likely than men to be targeted for both physical and sexual violence.

Violence against women is compounded by discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status, class and age. Such multiple forms of discrimination further restrict women's choices, putting them at increased risk of violence and making it even harder for them to obtain justice. There are no comprehensive statistics on cases of gender-based violence – an

indication in itself that this type of human rights violation is not taken seriously. Attitudes that accept and justify violence against women are widely held within Ugandan society.

The government of Uganda has undertaken some steps to address these abuses by drafting laws to prohibit violence against women and girls, including legislation on Domestic Violence, Marriage and Divorce, Sexual Offences and Trafficking in Persons. However, these have yet to be passed into law, despite being submitted to parliament several years ago.

Despite its efforts on the legislative front, the Ugandan state's response to gender-based violence falls short of its international obligation to prevent violence against women and to ensure women's access to justice. Allowing perpetrators to escape prosecution and punishment for their crimes compounds the problem." (Amnesty International (7 April 2010) *'I Can't Afford Justice' - Violence against women in Uganda*, p.10)

A February 2010 news article from *The New Vision* in Uganda reports:

"UGANDA is among the several African countries named in a report on human trafficking from Africa to the UK.

The report was compiled by Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA), a UK-based charity, which expressed concern over the growing trade and called for action against the problem.

Figures released by the UK Human Trafficking Centre showed that between April and December 2009, over 200 Africans were referred to the agency by charities as victims of human trafficking.

Some of the victims were children. A total of 89 victims were trafficked from Nigeria, 13 from Sierra Leone, (5) Kenya, (3) Ghana, (16) Zimbabwe, (5) Eritrea, (14) Uganda, (5) Somalia, and (1) Sudan.

Most of the victims had been exploited as sex slaves, for domestic servitude or used to claim government benefits.

"The figures reveal just the tip of the iceberg. We are certain that many more victims are trapped in exploitative and abusive situations and have no access to help," said Debbie Ariyo, the AFRUCA director.

The report stated that the victims are compelled to take oaths of allegiance, secrecy and confidentiality to bind them to their traffickers.

The oath also ensures compliance and guarantees the repayment of money claimed to be owed for transporting the victims to Europe and for their upkeep.

"Fearful of the repercussions of the oath taken, victims are compelled to endure the suffering in silence without access to help and support," a statement from the organisation read." (The New Vision (25 February 2010) *Uganda named in human trafficking*)

New Vision reports in a news article from October 2009, stating:

"THE African Union (AU) director for Citizen and Diaspora Directorate, Jamni Adisa, has warned Uganda of possible human trafficking.

This follows a recent warning by the US Ambassador to Uganda, Steven Browning, who expressed concern over the pace at which human trafficking was spreading.

Every year, millions of people are trafficked into modern day slavery, secretly transported across borders and sold as commodities. The International Organisation on Migration (IOM) contends that annual global human trafficking is worth between \$7b and \$12b, making it the third most lucrative criminal activity after narcotics and weapons trade.

The International Labour Organisation estimates 2.5 million people are trafficked and subjected to sexual or labour exploitation.

"With the AU summit coming to Uganda, the Government, should take advantage and be the first to implement the convention that protects refugees, returnees and IDPs," Adisa said." (New Vision (Kampala) (16 October 2009) *Uganda; AU Boss Cautions Uganda on Human Trafficking*)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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