
Asia Society Symposium

Combating Human Trafficking in Asia: A Strategy for Action

November 16, 2005
Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York City

Cosponsored with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

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8:30 am

Breakfast

9:00 am

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Jamie Metzl, Executive Vice President, Asia Society

9:15 am

An Overview: **Trafficking in Persons within Asia and across International Borders**

Panelists:

Amihan V. Abueva, Coordinator for Southeast Asia, Asia ACTs Against Child Trafficking

Ruchira Gupta, Executive Director, Apne Aap Women Worldwide, India

Mark Taylor, Senior Coordinator for Reports, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State

Moderator: **Nisha Varia**, Researcher, Women's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch

1. What are the different forms of human trafficking? Under what conditions does this trafficking occur? What are the less visible yet most prevalent forms of trafficking in Asia? How can successful interventions be made in these cases?
2. How do the United Nations, civil society groups, as well as governments, like the U.S. and countries in EU, define it? How does this definition address the issue's complexities, or not?
3. What societies and populations in Asia are most vulnerable to trafficking, e.g. minorities? How do legal and structural issues within and across countries perpetuate cycles of long-term vulnerability?
4. How do trends and patterns of trafficking to the U.S. compare to other regions of the world?

10:15 am

Panel I: **Sex and Labor Trafficking: A Closer Look at Two Critical Components of Trafficking**

Panelists:

Thetis Mangahas, Chief Technical Adviser/Programme Manager, ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour, Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Norma Timbang, Research Consultant, Washington State Human Trafficking Response Network (Former Executive Director, Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center, WA)

Neha Misra, Coordinator, Counter Trafficking Programs, Solidarity Center, AFL-CIO

Donna M. Hughes, Professor of Women's Studies at University of Rhode Island

Moderator: **Josh DeWind**, Director, Social Science Research Council

1. What are the different forms of sex trafficking within Asian countries? Is the sex trade a part of this? Does the situation in Asia impact the global sex industry? What particular trends and modalities are taking place in the region?
2. What different forms of exploitative practices are linked to labor trafficking? In which countries outside Asia do most trafficked migrant laborers end up as sweatshop workers, commercial or agricultural laborers, or maids and nannies? How are governments implicated in labor trafficking, if at all?
3. How does "irregular migration" compound the problem in trafficking in both the short and long term (future citizenship rights for children, etc.)? What impact do migration laws and border control practices have on this problem? What are the major transit routes across Asia? Which countries in Asia are major destinations for irregular migrants?
4. What are the consequences and impact on health brought about by sex and labor trafficking? Are health-based interventions adjusting to the changing face of sex and labor trafficking?

11:15 am

Coffee Break

11:30 am

Panel II: **Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead**

Panelists:

Shirley Seng, Coordinator, Kachin Women's Association Thailand

Amihan V. Abueva, Coordinator for Southeast Asia, Asia ACTs Against Child Trafficking

Juhu Thukral, Director, Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center

Thomas Steinfatt, Professor, University of Miami, Florida

Moderator: **Sam Zia-Zarifi**, Deputy Director, Asia Division, Human rights Watch

1. What are the efforts by NGOs, governments, the UN and other international organizations, including the private sector, to prevent trafficking?
 - What initiatives for collaboration are in place? What strategies or approaches work best, and under what conditions? What are the best ways to coordinate efforts and communication between and among them?
 - What sectors should be engaged at different levels for greater impact?
2. How do social instabilities and increasing state-sponsored ethnic persecution exacerbate trafficking in Southeast Asia?

3. What is the current status of laws relating to human trafficking in Southeast Asian countries like Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, etc.? What impedes their effective application and enforcement? What would enable successful prosecution?
4. What interventions have proven to work or have made significant impact in educating and empowering groups who are vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking? What roles can NGOs, tourism industries or employment agencies play?
5. What is the impact of anti-trafficking laws in Asia on sex workers? How do advocates for sex workers' rights and those opposed to legalizing prostitution work together to define and reach common solutions in securing human rights protection and ending sexual exploitation? How do national laws and international conventions address these issues?
6. Are the human rights of trafficked individuals protected under existing immigration, labor laws and anti-trafficking laws?

12:30 pm

Lunch Break

1:45 pm

Panel III: **Next Steps: Role of the International Community**

Panelists:

Thetis Mangahas, Chief Technical Adviser/Programme Manager, ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour, Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Mark Taylor, Senior Coordinator for Reports, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State

Moderator: **Frances Sullivan**, Regional Representative for North America and the Caribbean, International Organization for Migration

1. What forms of partnership and leadership are necessary to meet the challenge? What resources are required?
2. What can the U.S. do to make a meaningful impact on international opinion and policy-making to end human trafficking?
3. What is the impact of the U.S.'s current punitive policies, tier system and sanctions on countries with evidence of increasing trafficking? What are the limitations and alternatives?
4. What role can the United Nations or EU play? What steps need to be taken?
5. What revisions are necessary in state policy, migration law, and international conventions for a coherent and effective strategy to prevent and end human trafficking?
6. What are the necessary local, national and international infrastructures that must be in place to facilitate a systematic process and sustainable means to address trafficking?

2:45 pm

Conclusion and Review of Key Recommendations from Speakers

Moderators: **Sam Zia-Zarifi**, Deputy Director, Asia Division, Human rights Watch; and Asia Society

3:30pm

Adjourn