



Child Sex Tourism

Information for Travel Professionals

Tourism: Sun, Sand and Sexual Exploitation

Child sex tourism is a growing phenomenon in today's rapidly shrinking world, as access to and information about other countries becomes easier and easier to obtain. More than two million children are enslaved in the child sex trade. The demand for child prostitutes comes both locally and internationally. Reports indicate that perhaps 25 percent of sex tourists are Americans.

Child sex tourism is the act of traveling abroad to have sex with a minor (under 18). There are many myths that people use to justify child sex tourism. Some people believe that by paying a child for sex they are helping them because the money will help their family. The fact is most children NEVER see the money because it goes to pimps and brothel owners.

Many people also believe that children are less likely to be HIV positive which makes them think it is safer to have sex with children. The truth is children are more susceptible to HIV and other STDs, especially if they are involved in the prostitution business. Children have immature tissue in their bodies that tears much more easily than that of adults.

It is also believed that child prostitution is acceptable in other other countries. Child prostitution is not acceptable in any country. It is child abuse and is illegal in all countries around the world.

Children who are prostituted rarely go on to a normal life. They suffer long-term emotional, physical and social problems. Girls may have reproductive problems due to the immaturity of their bodies when they become sexually active. HIV and AIDS are also widely seen among prostituted children.

U.S. Crime Bill

In 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (Crime Bill) was signed into U.S. law. Under this law, it is illegal for a U.S. citizen to travel overseas with the intent to engage in sexual acts with a minor. Few Americans know this law exists. To be effective, it must be made known to the American public.

Take Action: What You Can Do to Fight Child Sex Tourism

The role of the travel professional is critical in the fight against child sex tourism. Knowledgeable travel professionals who are aware of all aspects of tourism, both good and bad, can only be a positive gain for travelers and the travel industry alike. Taking a firm stand

against child sex tourism will attract consumers who are looking for a serious and trustworthy business to handle their travel.

Promote Responsible Tourism

Create a healthy image of tourism, one that respects human values, not one that promotes other countries as the "exotic other" or exploits the native culture and environment. Provide information to employees and travelers about the U.S. law against child sex tourism as well as new laws being enforced by governments around the world.

Develop a clearly stated policy for your travel organization which condemns child sex tourism and prohibits involvement in promoting child sex tourism. All personnel should be informed and individually educated about the policy.

Train your personnel to know the signs of a sex tourist and how to properly handle the situation. When confronted with any inquiries about child sex tourism, all personnel should make it known to the prospective traveler that child sex tourism is both unacceptable and illegal. Any known instances of child sex tourism should be reported to the proper authorities.

Reporting Procedure

Reporting an allegation of child abuse is a serious issue and should be carefully considered.

What to Report:

If you know someone who is selling a child for sexual purposes, including prostitution.
If you know that a foreigner or local person is sexually abusing a child or buying a child for prostitution.

If you know that a hotel, tour operator or travel agent is involved in or making money from selling children for sexual purposes.

If You Suspect Abuse:

Try to find out as much information as possible: name, nationality, where they are staying, passport number, acquaintances, dates and locations.

Contact authorities as soon as possible:

U.S. Customs Service 703/293-8005

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 800/843-5678 or www.cyberline.com

Your local FBI field office.

What the Industry is Already Doing to Combat Child Sex Tourism

Some European airlines are now playing preventive in-flight videos on their long-haul flights, which inform travelers of the laws against child sex tourism.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) established a Child Prostitution and Tourism Watch Task Force, whose goals are to "prevent, uncover, isolate and eradicate" the exploitation of children in the sex trade.

The International Federation of Women's Travel Organizations (IFWTO) holds seminars across the U.S. and globally, which educate their members about the problems of child sex tourism and what they can do to help.

In 1994, the Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Association (UFTAA) was the first tourism industry organization to adopt the Child and Travel Agents' Charter.

In 1996, the members of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) unanimously passed a resolution condemning the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

A "No Child Sex Tourism" logo has been adopted worldwide by industry organizations that are actively working to prevent and eliminate child prostitution. These sticker-logos can be obtained from the IFWTO.

In 1996, the International Hotel and Restaurant Association passed a resolution against the sexual exploitation of children and published a leaflet urging its members to help stop child sex tourism. In Europe, tour operators have adopted codes of conduct for agents to combat sex tourism.

Resources

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ECPAT International

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International Federation of Women's Travel Organizations (IFWTO)

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World Tourism Organization

www.world-tourism.org

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