

## *Central and Eastern European Review*

**H. Richard Friman and Simon Reich, eds. *Human Trafficking, Human Security, and the Balkans*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 2007. 214 pp. ISBN: 13-978-0-8229-5974-7.**

The eight contributions presented together are unanimous in their conclusions concerning the insufficient response to the rise in human trafficking in the aftermath of the four Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. All address the need for ‘prevention, protection and prosecution’. The editors have derived figures from the Global Survival Network resulting in a remarkable estimate, namely that even by the mid-1990s, upward of 500,000 women had been trafficked into Western Europe from the Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, each year (p.6). From that time there has been an increasing focus on defining categories of exploitation as well as the categorization of the means to combat it, by various organizations. Four of these involve law enforcement, human rights, migration and economic approaches. A major difficulty that various anti-trafficking programs face is the lack co-ordination and information sharing between multiple local, governmental, non-governmental and international actors. Additionally, there is very little long-term vision and planning by any of the organizations attempting to address the situation. This is due in part to the fact that the same holds true of the organizations’ donors.

Under the approach concerned with protecting borders and preventing migration, trafficked women are rarely given proper protection. On the other hand they are asked to give witness statements in return for any kind of help, which places them at risk; this usually is asked without their being informed of their rights. A major step forward was taken in 2000, through the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime meeting of the heads of state from 80

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countries in Palermo. Protocols of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime were signed and a very precise definition of human trafficking was agreed. Various states focused more or less firmly on one or more of the Palermo Protocols.

Amongst other difficulties which all the contributors agree is that by criminalizing human trafficking and enhancing border controls, an unintended result has been the eroding of human security through forcing such activity further underground. The same has resulted from raiding brothels and bars where sex workers are known to trade. A major stimulant to trafficking was seen to be the arrival of peacekeeping personnel and military troops, encouraged to fraternize with locals, in the war damaged areas. Not only was the sexual need of so many men underestimated, but by giving them legal impunity, they were unaffected by law. Additional difficulties for those trafficked were reported as the loss of earnings through travel debts, fines, forced purchases (clothes, make-up, etc) and theft. Sometimes it was the police and other authority figures who were in connivance with trafficking and organized crime rings. Smuggling of humans may initially be the subject's choice, but it very often puts them in an extremely vulnerable position. It may be simply a short-term profit for the smuggler, whereas trafficked persons are exploited for longer-term gain. All contributors agree that too much focus has been on migration issues with too little regard for the trafficked person.

Lynellyn Long defines three different forms of trafficking exchanges (p.21). These are, the gift (young women taking part in trafficking in order to secure their future household welfare); service exchange (women who become victims of trafficking while actually seeking to find temporary employment); and commodified exchange (women who are moved around at will and forced to acquire various skills for entrepreneurial purposes). She suggests that interventions

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to protect women's economic rights would have beneficial effects on all the three forms of trafficking. She proposes that the tourist, media and transport industries need to be engaged in, and if necessary, sanctioned to assist in preventing trafficking. The Netherlands legalizes prostitution, but trafficked women there are treated as illegal migrants—thus they are doubly disadvantaged.

Julie Mertus and Andrea Bertore's chapter focuses mostly on Kosovo where they found that UNMIK and KFOR listed 75 restaurants, bars and clubs as off-limits to their personnel where it was believed that trafficked women were being forced to work. The International Organization for Migration found that over 80% of the women they interviewed had been recruited by a friend or relative. They see hope in the formation of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, founded in 2004.

Nicole Lindstrom gives a useful table (p.73), comparing the adoption, by Serbia and Montenegro by various stakeholders, of support for anti-trafficking strategies, with a conclusion that Montenegro tends to be more open to international policy influence.

Martina Vendenburg notes that trafficking was unreported, unacknowledged and unnamed in Bosnia prior to 1998 and finds that it was the arrival of peacekeepers that heralded the start of trafficking there, and that little prior thought had been given to this issue. She comments that local police moonlighted as brothel guards.

The Albanian contributor is Vasilika Hysi who found that of approximately 100,000 Albanian women and girls trafficked abroad during the 1990s, over 18,000 were rescued by 2001. She details the many steps to amend the Albanian criminal code, and Albania's co-operation with many international agencies, noting that it was NGOs rather than state institutions

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which provided the first shelters for trafficked women. She shares with the other contributors regrets concerning the lack of effective methods to adequately serve victims' needs.

Gabriela Konevska cites the Palermo Protocol definition of human trafficking (p.120) and discusses temporary residence permits necessary for effective victim protection, commenting that Italy provides a positive example on this issue. Amongst the many international organizations concerned with trafficking in the Balkans, Konevska selects the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) as enjoying critical success with innovations in both operational and legal areas.

By the time the reader reaches the editors' final chapter, repetitious agreement on the situation of human trafficking, how it should be addressed, and the consensus on universal shortcomings have become too frequent to merit such further focused attention. While this is an important book covering major issues of concern, to avoid such repetition, it might better have served as a useful handbook to be collectively written as one major document combining all the mutual findings, but also summarizing the slight deviations or differences of opinion as part of a single text. There is an extensive bibliography.

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