

End child prostitution pornography and trafficking

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CHILD SEX ABUSERS IN SOUTH AUCKLAND

Police Action at Last

For the last few years residents of South Auckland have been concerned at the public spectacle of under-age minors offering themselves as prostitutes to child sex abusers. ECPAT NZ has been vocal in its concern about this unacceptable situation.

Now, at last, we can welcome some police action to try and deal with the situation. For two weeks in the beginning of January the streets were monitored by police and during that time 25 adults were arrested on charges that include engaging in sexual activity with teenage girls. In the same operation 16 young people, including young girls as young as 13 years, were taken from the streets and returned to their families with some being placed in the care of Child, Youth and Family.

It is recognised that a sting operation of this kind takes long and careful preparation and involves many police but is still long overdue. Youth workers at Hunter's Corner and Otara have been reporting a high incidence of underage prostitutes since the time of the legalization of prostitution.

Mamatere Strickland who has worked to help sex workers in South Auckland for many years was

reported as saying that the number of underage prostitutes is rising because of the Prostitution Reform Act. "The act has taken police resources off the street" she said "and has therefore sent the message to pimps and gangs that there are opportunities to get away with things." (*Manukau Courier* 5.2.08)

Detective Senior Sergeant Pizzini spoke for the police when he stated that "men engaging in this activity are put on notice that they will be arrested and may well receive visits from the police at their homes or workplace."

In the aftermath of the arrests, Manukau police have asked the public for information on the involvement and exploitation of teenagers in the local sex industry. We encourage our readers to send on such information.

Beyond law enforcement there is a huge task waiting in New Zealand to provide family resources which will protect our children. ECPAT NZ will be looking at possible action in this area following the successful launch of the pilot "Choose with Care" programmes last year.



Over many years, Mamatere has been a figure of hope for the many prostitutes working the streets in South Auckland. Most evenings her bus circles the streets from Manurewa to Otahuhu with members of her team, Te Aronga Hou Inianei, offering help to young people in need. The bus was the property of the Plunket Society who were happy to assist this important work. But Plunket have now had to sell the bus, leaving Mamatere reliant on her own car. It is not a satisfactory situation and has severely curtailed the work at a time when it is at last beginning to show positive results.

Mamatere says that the Prostitution Reform Act has caused devastation within Maori and Pacific communities. In families with small incomes prostitution is often seen by young people as the only route to independence. Recognising prostitution as a legal and acceptable occupation has made it an attractive choice for many young boys and girls.

An ECPAT study "Speaking for Ourselves" confirms the fact that an unacceptable number of under-age boys and girls are now working as prostitutes in South Auckland. Some of the stories from this research will be released in the next few months.



**ECPAT NZ is pleased to announce
the appointment of a new Director.
Lyn Mayson was selected from a number of
applicants and began her work in the office this month.**

Lyn trained in nursing at Middlemore Hospital and became an intensive care specialist. She comes to us now after 15 years working in Asia. First with Terre des Hommes in Vietnam and then in Cambodia where her work included a UNDP health protection project, a programme with Street Children and finally with Save the Children Cambodia where she was Deputy Director for Operations.

She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her new position.

Her dream for ECPAT NZ is to stop the sexual exploitation of our children and she will make it a priority to develop strategies and tools which will protect children and show communities how to be more aware of the situation. As a longtime advocate of the "Choosing with Care" programme which was introduced to New Zealand last year she expects to see this play a significant role in our future work.

Beyond this Lyn welcomes the new programme being introduced to filter child pornography and is hoping to see it launched in the next few months.

Lyn acknowledges the responsibility for ECPAT NZ to help develop child-safe projects in the South Pacific and will further develop the partnership we have with the Cook Islands.

A friendly and enthusiastic advocate for children she hopes to make contact with the many ECPAT supporters in New Zealand. She is a good listener and efficient manager and we hope our readers will soon come to know her as a friend and a valued partner in our mutual struggle to protect children.

In welcoming Lyn we also say farewell to Alan Bell who has once again maintained the ECPAT NZ office as an Interim Director. His enthusiasm and business skills have been greatly appreciated by us all.

In Memorium

We join with all New Zealanders in mourning the death of Sir Edmund Hillary. A wonderful man whose humility and compassion marked him out as one of our country's greatest sons.

When ECPAT was formed in 1990 we had discussions with Sir Ed about the situation of Nepalese children, many of whom were being abducted and sold in the child slave markets of Mumbai or Hyderabad. He was already aware of this trafficking and we shared information and discussed possible solutions.

At that time, Hillary joined a number of notable international leaders including the Dalai Lama and Bishop Desmond Tutu in signing a statement which read:

I oppose the prostitution of children and view with concern the growing incidence of this practice. The sexual abuse of children by foreign tourists must be ended.

Sir Edmund Hillary's concern for the welfare of the children of Nepal will long be remembered.

The Paedophile Register

A New Zealand paedophile register is still just a dream for the future. Various individual politicians have tried to introduce a bill into parliament but so far there has been no progress. In the absence of any official register there are a few individuals and groups who have been sufficiently concerned that they have used newspaper reports to compile their own lists. Some of these lists can be found on the internet.

While we in New Zealand dither around with ethical questions, both the United States and Great Britain have already established government sanctioned paedophile registers which have proved so successful that there are now plans to expand their use.

Last week the UK introduced a pilot scheme through which single mothers will be able to ask the police whether potential boyfriends have paedophile convictions before they start a relationship. It is a trial scheme and will be closely monitored to see how it works but children's campaigners have generally welcomed the move.

Some are now pressing for a new law that will allow parents to obtain details of convicted paedophiles in their neighbourhoods but this is unlikely to be introduced, although it is available in some parts of the United States.

NEW INITIATIVE TO STOP CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

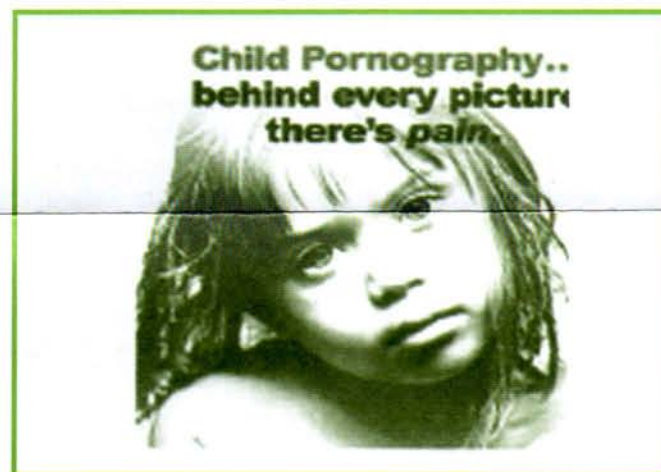
Jack helps his young daughter open the computer to the children's site Pokemon.

Following one of the links he is shocked to discover that it leads to a site showing graphic scenes of child pornography. This is a true story and it made Jack one of the many campaigners working to halt the flow of child pornography on the internet. But doing this is a difficult task. Pornography sites are among the most popular in the internet world and, despite their illegality, child pornography sites continue to grow in number.

The huge increase in these sites cannot be stopped by education campaigns or the arrest of pornographers. For that reason, there is now a concerted effort to find better solutions to stop the flow and reduce the impact of child pornography.

New Zealand has always been at the forefront of the battle to end the influence of child pornography and the Department of Internal Affairs, which monitors this work, continues to identify and help convict those who trade in child pornography.

We are now coming closer to perfecting a software which will help filter the flow of child pornography into this country. In a brief trial run recently the DIA were able to identify more than 3,000 attempts by New Zealanders to enter illegal child pornography sites. The figure was higher than most of us would have guessed and indicates the importance of the new filtering programme being developed.



CHALLENGING CHILD SEX ABUSE IN THE PACIFIC

A new report on the Pacific reveals an alarming degree of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and confirms that children are most at risk in their own homes and communities where the abuse often comes from people they know and trust.

Jointly prepared and supported by ECPAT, UNESCAP and UNICEF the report is based on studies conducted between October 2004 and June 2005 in Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The report shows that in each country children are being sexually abused by family members and neighbours. There is also some evidence of the growth of child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism and trafficking (for sexual purposes).

While there are some confirmed incidents of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation committed by foreign tourists and foreign workers in the Pacific, the problem of sexual violence against children is predominantly perpetuated by local men.

Among many specific situations described in the report were the following:

*In Papua New Guinea, medical staff at the Port Moresby General Hospital treat one or two cases of child rape every day.

*Fiji police statistics show that of the 35 cases of sexual abuse against children reported to the Sexual Offences Unit in 2000, 33 were committed by a trusted family member.

*The Solomon Islands reported sexually transmitted infections in children as young as 1 to 3 years, indicating the existence of child sexual abuse in that country.

*Kiribati (population: 86,500) found 15 officially reported cases of 'defilement' (sexual intercourse with a girl younger than 13) between 1999 and 2004.

The report calls for strengthening of laws to end the cultural mores which protect those who facilitate or perpetrate crimes against children. A culture of silence appears to have prevented communities and governments confronting, addressing and preventing sexual violence against children.

As part of a wider study of the Pacific, ECPAT International is working with ECPAT NZ to study developments in the Cook Islands. The interim report was presented last November and we are currently in the process of the follow-up to this study.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Child Slaves From Africa

Several hundred African children have been sold into slavery in England in recent years. In the past 12 months alone, a British government survey estimated that at least 330 children, including several under the age of 12, had been trafficked to Britain.

Many parents sell their children to criminal gangs at a young age in the hope they will find a better life out of Africa. But once in Britain the children are used to obtain welfare and special housing benefits from the government. Some work in shops or restaurants and others are caught up in sexual slavery.

ECPAT UK has publicly called for urgent government action to stop the flow of children and to offer proper protection to those who escape or who are freed from their abusers.

Gardens of the Night

A surprising highlight of this year's German film festival was the Damien Harris film, *Gardens of the Night*. It is one of many recent films dealing with the issues of child abduction and sexual abuse but while others have usually been over-sensationalized and dismissed by critics this one was widely praised.

According to one critic, the friendship between the two young girls at the centre is handled with sensitivity, taking them through childhood and messed-up teens. The strength of the film is in the acting performance which makes even the monsters seem human.

Harris reportedly spent years researching and writing his script. In quiet, subtle ways his story shows how such things happen and why children gradually lose the will and ability to call out for help.

Shameless Parents

It doesn't just happen in Asia and Africa!

It is hard to believe but shamefully true that a Gold Coast (Queensland) couple sold their young daughter as a prostitute from the time she was 12 years old. She was hired out to at least 200 clients through the internet.

Last month the parents admitted their guilt in court. The mother, aged 42, was jailed for 13 years and her husband jailed for 10 years.

The daughter told the police that she would often be pulled from class to see clients with the parents telling the teacher she had a medical appointment.

In a related case police laid charges against one of the clients who admitted that he knew the child was underage. A primary school teacher, he killed himself shortly after his appearance in court.

The police officer in charge of the case said that in his dealings with the girl's parents they had never shown any remorse, never told him why they did it or had asked after their children. "This was really the most obscene breach of a parental bond that you'll ever come across," he said.

Sex on Mobile Phones

European mobile phone operators are joining forces to stop access to child sex abuse websites. Leading operators such as Vodaphone and Orange are installing technology in their networks to block thousands of blacklisted sites.

Increasingly, mobile phones have internet access as a standard feature and since there is more anonymity in a cell phone than a computer, they are the favoured means of seeking illegal materials.

Just a reminder that the tax laws have now changed and there is a tax exemption on all donations to charitable organisations. All donations over \$5 received by ECPAT NZ prior to March 31st will be eligible for this exemption.

Enclosed is my donation of \$.....

Donations over \$5.00 are eligible for tax exemption

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