

Action of Churches Together in Scotland Anti-Human Trafficking Ecumenical Group

Introduction

In 2007, in acknowledgment of the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) formed an ecumenical Working Group to consider what could be done to combat human trafficking, which it regarded as a modern form of slavery. A report (Trafficking Task Group Report 2010) was prepared which recommended that a new permanent Working Group be formed to compile information on the work of each Church against trafficking so that it could be shared. Common policies could be drawn up for recommendation for the Churches to adopt and for joint action.

The new group, set up in June 2011 (see Appendix 1 for membership), was given the task of assisting the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council to respond to the following deliverance, which had been accepted by the 2011 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland:

"In light of the Guild's report on Human Trafficking, and the potential rise in such trafficking for the sex industry in the 2014 Commonwealth Games, instruct the Church and Society Council, in consultation with the Guild to study the issue and report to the General Assembly of 2012 with a strategy for action."

This paper reports the findings of the ACTS Working Group with regards to human trafficking and outlines a strategy for action. While the deliverance refers to trafficking for the sex industry, as stated below, human trafficking is also a cause of exploitation for other commercial reasons. As such, issues that concern these wider aspects of human trafficking are also addressed in this report. Additionally, while the deliverance focused on human trafficking at the time of the Commonwealth Games, it is acknowledged that it is not confined to this event. Consequently, the group will consider issues surrounding human trafficking as an ongoing activity.

The report comprises three sections. Firstly, the context is set and framed around six key questions, namely:

- *What is human trafficking?*
- *What is the scale of human trafficking?*
- *Will trafficking for labour or sexual purposes increase at the time of the 2014 Commonwealth games?*
- *What are the drivers for human trafficking?*
- *Trafficking for sexual exploitation*
- *Is human trafficking a women's-only issue?*

Secondly, the activities that Churches in Scotland have been involved in to address the issue of human trafficking are outlined, and lastly, a strategy for future action is presented.

Context

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them (UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). Exploitation includes enforced prostitution for sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs (UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). Trafficking is an appalling kind of violence committed against people who are vulnerable. In theological language it is a sin of injustice. For the followers of Christ, the call to stand alongside the dispossessed, marginalised and oppressed and to be advocates for those who are robbed of their humanity is not an optional extra.

An article in the Observer described the horrific experiences of a 17-year-old student who was forced from her home in Romania and plunged into a nightmare of brutal sex crimes in the UK.

"There was one guy and I didn't want to do what he asked me. So he beat me up because he was drunk, pulled my hair and slapped me like this...Can you imagine how I was feeling taking my clothes off, exposing the horrible underwear the pimp had bought? I was supposed to be in high school, not in England sleeping with men and making money for criminals."

Marinela Badea - *The Observer*, 6 February 2011

The sex crimes unit of Greater Manchester police arrested her for prostitution-related offences. Her first day in custody was the first since her arrival in England six months earlier that she had not been forced to have sex.

What is the scale of human trafficking?

Men, women and children are trafficked within their own countries and across international borders. Trafficking affects every continent and most countries. The United Kingdom has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking, which came into force in the UK on 1 April 2009. This Convention aims to prevent and combat trafficking of human beings and protect the human rights of the victims of trafficking. The UK Government has set up a National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring that they receive the appropriate care. The NRM provides reliable statistical data on victims of trafficking who have been identified by the authorities. However, due to the hidden and illegal nature of human trafficking, gathering statistics on the true scale of the problem is difficult.

According to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (2011), between 1st April 2009 and 31st March 2011, there were 1481 referrals in the United Kingdom to the National Referral Mechanism.

These referrals include individuals from 88 nationalities, of which the majority were trafficked from Nigeria, China and Vietnam.

As highlighted above, these figures are considered to represent a very conservative estimate of the size of the problem. The UK House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Report in May 2009 stated that there were an estimated 5,000 victims in the UK.

The forms of exploitation reported by the victims referred are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Forms of exploitation

	Adults	Minors
Sexual exploitation	506	115 (12 – 18 years)
Labour exploitation	331	134 (under 10–18 yrs)
Domestic servitude	201	52 (under 10–18 yrs)
Unknown exploitation	53	89 (under 10–18 yrs)
Total	1091	390

NRM, Serious Organised Crime Agency (2011)

The recently published report of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's *Inquiry into Human Trafficking in Scotland* states that 134 persons were referred into the NRM in Scotland between April 2009 and December 2010. The Inquiry, which was chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy, particularly highlights trafficking people from Nigeria to Scotland for sexual exploitation, whereas trafficking of people from the Baltic States and the Czech Republic and Slovakia appears to be mainly for the purposes of forced labour; trafficking from the Indian sub-continent is mainly for domestic servitude (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2011). The authors of the report note that exploitation of people from these countries is not confined to the purposes mentioned above.

While recognising the problematic nature of gathering reliable data, the fact remains that statistics are just numbers; they tell us where and when; how many; where they have come from and where they go; their ages and sex and nationality. What they cannot tell us are the human stories behind the numbers. Each number represents one life, one woman, one man, one child, for whom life has become less than that, a travesty of life, from whom dignity has been taken as she or he is held captive and violated both spiritually and physically. When any person is treated as a commodity, all of humanity is diminished. We are called to care for God's creation.

Will trafficking for labour or sexual purposes increase at the time of the 2014 Commonwealth Games?

According to Strathclyde Police there is little evidence from current intelligence or from other major events, such as the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London in 2012, to conclude that human trafficking will increase at the time of the Commonwealth Games. However, the fact that the police have no evidence does not mean that it will not happen. It is also

important to note that trafficking is happening at present. Conversations with a number of organisations that work with trafficked women, for example, the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA) and the Human Trafficking Foundation, highlighted that it is likely that there is usually increased demand for sexual services during major events and that this usually involves 'internal trafficking' where prostitutes are moved into the city from other places or from one area of the city to another. Indeed, these organisations also confirmed that human trafficking is not confined to cities but also occurs in rural areas.

What are the drivers for human trafficking?

Globalization in general, and migration in particular, affect many aspects of people's lives. A significant number of people worldwide migrate willingly to more economically prosperous regions, seeking new opportunities in the hope of finding jobs and leaving behind the perceived 'backwardness' of their home countries (Hernandez and Rudolph 2011). According to Mahmoud and Trebesch (2009), the growing, but unsatisfied, demand for legal migration, together with the proliferation of organised transnational crime has created conditions that are ripe for illicit activity in which people are regarded as commodities to be trafficked for profit. Migration has become a multi-billion dollar industry that can be particularly lucrative for those willing to use physical violence and restraint. Mahmoud and Trebesch cite legislation and low levels of law enforcement, poor border controls, and bribery and corruption as factors that exacerbate human trafficking. Poverty, inequality, lack of opportunity, and political instability in source countries are also drivers of human trafficking.

As shown in Table 1 above, individuals who are victims of trafficking most commonly are subjected to sexual or economic exploitation.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation.

While poverty and vulnerability affect both trafficking for labour and for sexual exploitation, trafficking for sexual exploitation is inextricably tied into prostitution. According to a report by Brittany & Dave (2011) of the School of Law of Edinburgh University, forced prostitution is the second most profitable criminal activity only surpassed by drug trafficking. They make the point that, in addition to high profits, forced prostitution is also attractive due to its low risk of detection.

One of the best ways to reduce trafficking for reasons of sexual exploitation would be to tackle the demand for sexual services. 'End Prostitution Now' is a campaign led by Glasgow City Council which aims to raise awareness of the harm caused through prostitution and to put the focus on the buyers of sex, since it is the demand which fuels the sex industry. Active participation in campaigns such as that organised by 'End Prostitution Now' could be effective, particularly if supported by young men and male Church Leaders at national and local levels. Involvement of young people through the Youth Parliament and the various youth networks of the Churches, for example the National Youth Assembly of the Church of Scotland, could be influential in mobilising

opinion. In Sweden, where purchase of sex had been made illegal, it has been found that younger people's opinions appeared to have been most greatly influenced by the change in the law.

Is human trafficking a women's-only issue?

Reports such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2006) suggest that trafficking victims are mostly young women who are forced into prostitution and exploited in the commercial sex industry (Mahmoud and Trebesch 2009). Of the 1481 referrals to the National Referral Mechanism, 1066 (72%) were female (Serious Organised Crime Agency 2011). Yet, the International Organization for Migration (2006) report and qualitative surveys from Russia and South-eastern Europe underline the dominant but neglected issue of male exploitation (Tyuryukanova 2005, Surtees 2005). According to these sources, a large share of those trafficked from Central and Eastern Europe are men being exploited in agriculture, construction, or warehouse work.

Based on statistics from the Counter-Trafficking Database from 78 countries (1999-2006), the International Organization for Migration states that 52% of those victims are men, 42% are women and 6% are both men and women.

In a study conducted in Edinburgh and Glasgow, MacLeod et al. (2008) interviewed over 100 men who had used women who were prostitutes. The authors of the study concluded that it is imperative to address men's demand for prostitution and that acceptance of prostitution encourages violence against women. The research revealed that violent behaviours against women were associated with the view that men were entitled to sexual access to women. The experiences described by Marinela attest to the powerlessness of women who are abused.

But they just take the violent men outside. Nothing ever happens to them even if I am really hurt. Even if they stink, and have come straight from work, you have to sleep with them – it was so horrible.

Marinela Badea - *The Observer*, 6 February 2011

Theological Reflection

The fundamental imperative that compels the churches to stand against trafficking is founded in the creation story. Human beings have been created in the image of God and are loved equally by God. Therefore no man, woman or child can ever be treated as a commodity or a possession. Already in the early biblical tradition we find the seeds of a call for the people of God to pursue justice for those who are vulnerable and to seek their release from bondage (Deuteronomy 10:18, Jeremiah 22: 3). The prophetic tradition of the Old Testament makes it clear that worship without justice is meaningless (e.g. Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6-8). Through his life, witness and teachings, Jesus calls his disciples not just to stand against injustice and to help those that are vulnerable but

He invites them to offer protection to all in need; at times a costly kind of hospitality that consumes the giver. The interconnection between human trafficking and prostitution has already been noted and the theological rationale against prostitution echoes the themes above of the value of people made in the image of God, care for the vulnerable and a call to act justly and with compassion. In addition insights from a liberation theology perspective consider the actions of the 'punter', not just the victim, in an analysis of power and wealth as part of the quest for justice.

What have the Churches been doing to address the issue of human trafficking?

As noted in the introduction, ACTS set up an ecumenical Working Group in 2007 to consider what could be done to combat human trafficking. The group found that Churches in Scotland had been endeavouring to tackle it in a range of ways. Some of these activities are summarised in this section.

They had contributed to efforts to persuade the British Government to sign up to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which was the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011). In 2009, representatives of six denominations and members of the ACTS Trafficking Group were invited to meet with the Scottish Parliament Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Solicitor General and were assured of the ongoing commitment of the Scottish Government to tackle the problem of human trafficking in Scotland through allocating resources to pursuing and prosecuting the traffickers and also making sure that there is better support and services for victims. The Guild of the Church of Scotland, the Salvation Army and the Mothers' Union of the Scottish Episcopal Church have submitted responses to the proposed Criminalisation of the Purchase and Sale of Sex (Scotland) Bill. The Parliamentary Prayer Group has had trafficking as the subject of one of its meetings.

The Guild of the Church of Scotland, with the Church and Society Council and the World Mission Council, had compiled information and study packs. Conferences had been organised to raise the awareness of church members and the general public of what was happening in this country and across the world.

The Salvation Army had set up a 'safe house' in England for individuals rescued from trafficking and, since July 2011, has been contracted for two years by the UK Government to manage the support of victims of Human Trafficking in England and Wales.

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) is a church-based investor coalition that undertakes research, advocacy and dialogue to encourage the business community and ECCR's members to meet the highest standards of corporate responsibility, transparency, and positive-impact investment. Its annual public debate in 2011 focused on the theme '*Vulnerable Workers, Trafficking, Pornography and the Economics of Exploitation: London 2012 and beyond*' from which it has published a briefing paper for investors entitled '*Hotels, sex trafficking and London 2012*'. One possible area for consideration by Scottish Churches, which is of particular interest to ECCR, is the potential influence that the major church denominations and other church

bodies can exert as investors, for example through engagement with large hotel chains. The Church Investors Group is engaging with InterContinental Hotels Group and Whitbread about the London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 Games (CIG: www.churchinvestorsgroup.org.uk).

The ACTS 2007 Working Group's report recommended that a permanent group be formed to compile and share information and for joint action by Churches. As a consequence, the current ACTS Associated Ecumenical Group on Human Trafficking, which includes two representatives from the Church of Scotland Church and Society Council, was established in April 2011. This Group has held regular meetings during which information has been exchanged and ideas developed for potential action. It was from these meetings that the suggestions emerged to host a Round Table meeting, develop a media strategy and a strategy for action and submit an application for funding the post of Scottish Churches Anti Human Trafficking Development Worker.

Round Table meeting

Discussions took place at a Round Table meeting in Glasgow in September 2011 with other organisations that are engaged in work to prevent human trafficking or support its victims within Scotland. The aim of the meeting was to find out what these organisations were planning in relation to preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in order to identify how the Churches could complement such activities. The meeting was attended by representatives from ACTS, the statutory services and voluntary sector (see Appendix 2 for a full list of attendees). It was at this meeting that the group was informed by the representative from Strathclyde Police that it is not clear that human trafficking will increase because of the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Instead, concern was raised about the level of on-going trafficking (both internal within the UK and from international sources) for sexual exploitation, cheap labour and domestic servitude.

It was also noted that athletes coming to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London are to receive two information packs; one featuring the rights of women and the other to outline the legal situation in the UK regarding, for example, the age at which a person could legitimately be a sexual partner. It was reported that 'More than Gold' is planning to organise, through the churches, accommodation for the families of athletes who are coming to London for the Olympic Games. A similar strategy could be adopted for Glasgow and the Commonwealth Games. If this were to happen, those providing accommodation should receive awareness-raising training, training on how to identify people who may have been trafficked, and on appropriate action.

The 2007 Church of Scotland resource pack for the Church on human trafficking '*To be silent is to be unfaithful*' (produced by the Guild, the Church and Society Council and the World Mission Council) was commended and it was suggested that it should be widely distributed to stimulate discussion and raise awareness of the issue amongst women and men. This resource is available online at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/3840/human_trafficking_resource.pdf

Media Strategy

The importance of engaging with various forms of media to raise awareness of human trafficking was acknowledged, with different 'packages' developed to suit the needs of different audiences.

Application to fund the post of Anti Human Trafficking Development Worker

An application, submitted by ACTS to Comic Relief to fund the post of an Anti Human Trafficking Development Worker, was unsuccessful. The proposed remit was, a) to raise awareness among church-related workers of human trafficking and sexual exploitation among young people, b) to support young people in avoiding human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and c) to provide information and sources of support for young people if they become a victim of trafficking or exploitation. Consideration is being made to developing an application to an alternative source of funding.

Strategy for future action

Having considered the evidence of human trafficking into and within Scotland, the Working Group presents this report to the member Churches of ACTS and as a fulfilment of the request made by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2011. This report seeks to draw attention to the anguish and misery that human trafficking causes. Furthermore, in responding to the deliverance, which was accepted by the 2011 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, it presents the following strategy for action in relation to the issue of human trafficking in general and, in particular, for the sex industry with specific reference, but not exclusively, to the Commonwealth Games to be held in Scotland in 2014. The Working Group acknowledges the interconnection of trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution and recommends that strategies to end prostitution are integrated into the human trafficking strategy.

Mahmoud and Trebesch (2009) reported evidence that awareness-raising campaigns can play a successful role in reducing trafficking risks. Much of the action suggested here focuses on raising awareness of the problem among, a) the general public, and b) church members and congregations.

At this point we have identified a number of activities that we can start doing now, which focus on this overarching aim of raising awareness, Scotland-wide.

In all of these actions wider ecumenical involvement and participation will be invited. This is an issue for all the Churches, and by working together the impact will be much greater.

General Public

AIM:

To present clearly in the public square the Churches' commitment to tackling human trafficking.

OBJECTIVES

- Presentation of information/evidence to raise awareness of the issue,
- Make it clear that the issue is not confined to Glasgow or urban areas, but should be a concern for the whole church,
- Church Leaders offering their support to the campaign.

ACTIONS

The Church of Scotland Church and Society Council commits to:

- Offer speakers to give talks, lectures or lead workshops on the issue of anti-human trafficking to community and charitable groups, statutory agencies and government bodies,
- Collaborate in hosting and promoting a national conference to explore the issue in more detail,
- Liaise closely with the Human Trafficking Foundation and other relevant organisations about how the work of the Churches can best support practical efforts to help those affected,
- Develop a joint media strategy to better articulate the views and work of the Churches to a general public audience.

Church Members and Congregations

AIM:

To inform church members about the issue and encourage them to think, pray and act on the issue.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide clear and accessible information for congregations and individuals.
- Present a theological rationale for why human trafficking is an issue with which the congregations should engage,
- Encourage the congregations to speak out against human trafficking and prostitution,
- Equip church members with information about sources of help for victims of trafficking.

ACTIONS

The Church of Scotland Church and Society Council commits to:

- Prepare and publish Bible study and liturgical material for use in churches,
 - Produce guidance for churches on what they can do to respond to the issue, for example through relations with statutory and voluntary support agencies, what to look out for in their community, and where further sources of help and training are available,
 - Produce a Discussion Starter Leaflet to help congregations and individuals explore the issues,
 - Produce a poster to display on a church notice board which can signpost vulnerable people and victims of trafficking to places where they can get support,
 - Publicise the Church of Scotland's resource pack *To be silent is to be unfaithful*,
 - Run a training event for activists in local churches to explore the issue (for the Church of Scotland this would be aimed at the local congregational contacts for Church and Society issues).
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- Support a campaign to support the proposed Criminalisation of the Purchase and Sale of Sex Bill,
 - Endorse the End Prostitution Now campaign and invite men in the Church, church leaders and young men, through for example the National Youth Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to be publicly involved in support for this campaign,
 - Encourage individuals to sign the Slavery-Free London 2012 Pledge and to support efforts to establish a similar campaign for Glasgow 2014.

Potential Future Work

Three further areas have been identified for developing the work around anti-human trafficking. The ACTS Working Group is not proposing any actions at this stage as conversations are ongoing about the most valuable contribution that Churches can offer. The Working Group will continue to explore all options and opportunities, including working with ECCR and 'More than Gold' in the run up to and during the Commonwealth Games 2014. The Group will report back to ACTS member churches on progress made and future plans in the run up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The three broad areas are:

International ecumenical partnerships

Are there things we can learn, or stories we can share, with church partners both at home and around the world?

Would a gathering of real-life experiences of immigration, positive and negative, and case studies about trafficking be a useful resource to the churches in Scotland?

Is there anything practical that Scottish churches can do to support partner churches in those countries where there is a higher risk of people being targeted by traffickers?
What more can be done to gain an understanding about the underlying issues which lead to people being trafficked?

Assisting Victims of Trafficking

Would a fund-raising initiative be possible and desirable, and if so where should any monies raised be given?
What agencies are already doing practical things and how can the churches support them?
Should Scottish Churches hold a day of prayer for the victims of human trafficking and establish this as part of the liturgical year?

Activities to take place during the Commonwealth Games 2014

What awareness-raising activities can be planned to coincide with the Games?
What practical activities can be planned to coincide with the Games?

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Campaigns to end trafficking

Antislavery International: www.antislavery.org

Anti – Trafficking Alliance - www.atalliance.org.uk

<http://www.blueblindfold.co.uk/>

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) www.castla.org

Coalition against Trafficking in Women: www.catwinternational.org

End Child Prostitution and Trafficking <http://www.ecpat.net/EI/index.asp>

Free the Slaves: www.freetheslaves.net

http://www.mtvexit.org/?lang=en_us

<http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/action/>

Shared Hope International www.sharedhope.org

<http://www.stopthetraffik.org/language.aspx>

Services / support

Poppy Project - http://www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY_Project/POPPY_Project.php

TARA - <http://www.saferglasgow.com/services/reducing-violence-against-women/tara.aspx>

Further reading and resources

Equality Human Rights in Scotland, <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/scotland/>

International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol): www.interpol.com

The Human Trafficking Foundation. <http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org>

The United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) www.ukhtc.org/

The Protection Project: www.protectionproject.org

Appendix 1: ACTS Ecumenical Working Group Members

Lindsey Sanderson (Chair)
Tom Moyes (Secretary)

ACTS' Assistant General Secretary
ACTS' Network Officer

Helen-May Bayne
David Bradwell
Chloe Clemmons
Clunie Conochie
Margaret Hastings
John McCaffrey
Alistair Stevenson
Jacci Stoye
Bill Taylor
Hazel Watson
Iain Whyte

Church of Scotland Guild
Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Office
Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Office
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic Church
Salvation Army
Evangelical Alliance
Scottish Episcopal Church
Church of Scotland
Church of Scotland
Church of Scotland

Appendix 2: Attendees at Round Table meeting 15 September 2011

Name	Organisation
Lindsey Sanderson	ACTS
Tom Moyes	ACTS
Bronagh Andrew	TARA
Alison Angus	Church of Scotland Guild –Paisley
Helen-May Bayne	Church of Scotland Guild
Louise Belton	Glasgow City Council
Eilidh Brown	Victim Support Scotland
Fiona Buchanan	Scottish Women's Aid
Linda Cheyne	Women's Support Project
Chloe Clemmons	Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Office
Kate Curtis	Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women
Susan Groves	Mothers' Union, Scottish Episcopal Church
Ann Hamilton	Human Trafficking Foundation
Margaret Hastings	Roman Catholic Church
Moira Hewitt	Church of Scotland Guild
Felicity Hollands	Streetlight, Edinburgh
John McCaffrey	Salvation Army
Elaine McGhee	Strathclyde Police
Christine Murdoch	Church of Scotland, Greenock & Paisley Presbytery
A.N. Other	Glasgow City Council
Chris Plews	Presbytery of Glasgow
Margaret Shuttleworth	Church of Scotland, Ayr Presbytery
Alistair Stevenson	Evangelical Alliance
Hazel Watson	Church and Society Council, Church of Scotland