

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MONGOLIA

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Human trafficking in Mongolia is a difficult problem to monitor. For illegal trafficking, there are few if any statistics available. One estimate, by the Human Rights Commission in Mongolia, postulated that by the end of 2002 over 200 women had been trafficked.<sup>1</sup> Women are the primary victims of trafficking in and out of Mongolia. What we do know is that human trafficking there is on the increase, and that to effectively counter the threats posed by it, the problems that lead to such dire situations must be understood. In addition, the threats posed by trafficking itself must be studied in order to prevent such abuses in future.

**Fig. 1- Six Dimensions of Human Trafficking in Mongolia<sup>2</sup>**

Nature of Threat	Threat to the <i>individual</i> caused by human trafficking in Mongolia	Threat to the <i>state</i> caused by human trafficking in Mongolia
Values threatened	Physical, psychological safety, traditional views of femininity and the family	International reputation, border safety, rule of law
Whose values	Women trafficked and their families & friends	The state in general, agencies such as police, border security
Sources of threat	Traffickers, pimps, customers, as well as collusive officials	Collusive officials, unmonitored borders, welcoming foreign governments
Means to counter threat	Education and awareness, eventual economic development	Less corrupt officials, destruction of criminal networks
Control of means	The individual, families, the education system, economic development agencies	Law enforcement agencies, border and passport agencies, countries of destination
Fiscal responsibility	State agencies, foreign aid organizations, federal programs	National government, other regional governments

<sup>1</sup> "Mongolia". Stop the Traffic 2 Conference. Melbourne: Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, 2003. <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/advisory/trafficking/news.htm>. (Accessed 28 January 2006).

<sup>2</sup> The six questions are from "Typology of Non-traditional Security" prepared and distributed by Prof. Tsuneo Akaha, Monterey Institute of International Studies, in IP556, *Non-traditional Security*, January 24, 2006.

Human trafficking in Mongolia poses two primary non-traditional security threats: to the individual and to the state. First there is the very real security risk to the trafficked, in terms of physical violence, the spread of disease, and severe emotional distress. Second, there is the danger to the nation by exposing insufficient border controls, enriching criminal groups on both sides of the border, as well as the corrupt officials who facilitate the trafficking. As a threat to the individual and as a threat to state control, human trafficking in Mongolia is a growing concern, and one that seems to be on the rise not only in Mongolia, but across Central and Northeast Asia as well.

**Economic and Demographic Realities in Mongolia**

It is easy to understand why, given Mongolia’s economic and developmental statistics, especially when compared to other countries in the region, the problem of human trafficking in Mongolia is only getting worse. Of course, the best possible solution would be to ensure the kind of economic development that could provide meaningful and rewarding employment for all who wanted it in Mongolia. This has not been forthcoming, however, and it is precisely because of this that many women initially choose to seek their fortunes abroad. The following charts illustrate the lack of serious development in Mongolia.

**Fig. 2- Human Development Trends in Northeast Asia (HDI Values)<sup>3</sup>**

	Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
1985	0.827	0.594		0.668	0.78	0.895
1990	0.862	0.627	0.817	0.673	0.818	0.911
1995	0.882	0.683	0.77	0.633	0.855	0.925
2000				0.657	0.884	0.936
2003	0.916	0.755	0.795	0.679	0.901	0.943

**Fig. 3- GDP Per Capita with Purchasing Power Parity (in U.S. Dollars- 2003)<sup>4</sup>**

Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
27,179	5,003	9,230	1,850	17,971	27,967

<sup>3</sup> “Statistics.” *Human Development Report 2005*. United Nations Development Programme, 2005. <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/>. Accessed May 1, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Fig. 4- GDP Annual Growth Rate (%)<sup>5</sup>**

	Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
1975-2003	4.3	8.2	-2.1	-2.0	6.1	2.4
1990-2003	2.1	8.5	-1.5	-2.5	4.6	1.0
1975-2003	4.3	8.2	-2.1	-2.0	6.1	2.4
1990-2003	2.1	8.5	-1.5	-2.5	4.6	1.0

While Mongolia's overall development index rating has improved since socialist times, there has not been the same dispersion of wealth to all sectors of society as was previously seen in the socialist economy. This is due to increasing unemployment and underemployment (relatively unknown under socialism), an end to regulated wages and pay grades, the cessation of many consumer price subsidies, and an increase in corruption. Correspondingly, Mongolia now has some of the highest income disparity in the region, on par with China.

**Fig. 5- Ratio of Richest 10% to Poorest 10%<sup>6</sup>**

Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
17.8	18.4	7.1	17.8	7.8	4.5

Income disparity is only part of the economic picture of Mongolia. More than any other country in the region, women play a vital part in the Mongolian economy. Women can be said to occupy most low and mid-level positions in the country (65.6% of the professional and technical workforce),<sup>7</sup> from education to banking to services. One hypothesis states that this is because men prefer and predominate in the traditional, animal-husbandry based sectors of the economy. There is still a "glass ceiling" in place, however, and many women find it difficult to advance into managerial and executive positions. Of the seventy-six representatives in the parliament only five are women, and women as a whole only make up 30.2% of administrators and managers in the country.<sup>8</sup> This is further demonstrated in pay disparities; Mongolian women earn a mere 66% of what their male counterparts earn.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.<sup>6</sup> Ibid.<sup>7</sup> Ibid.<sup>8</sup> Ibid.<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

So while Mongolian women are a vital component of the economy, and must work in order for Mongolia to progress, their work is not as highly valued as that of men, and there are few opportunities for advancement and pay raises in the country. This may lead women to look internationally for income-generating opportunities.

**Fig. 6- Ratio of Female Economic Activity to Male Economic Activity (%)<sup>10</sup>**

Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
66	86	83	88	71	68

In tandem with income disparity, as previously mentioned, is corruption. Not only is corruption a leading cause of the economic languor that provokes many Mongolians to seek employment overseas, but in the case of human trafficking it is also the means by which many of the victims and traffickers leave the country. More honest than Russia only, Mongolia ranks near the bottom in terms of perceived honesty of its officials. It is this lack of transparency and honesty that, combined with economic depravity, has led many traffickers to see Mongolia as an ideal place to recruit from. Mongolian officials, including police and border guards, are alleged to have been complicit in and profited from human trafficking in Mongolia.<sup>11</sup> Obviously, this represents a serious challenge to civil society groups in Mongolia working to stem the tide of human trafficking in that country.

**Fig. 7- Perceived Honesty (inverse Perceived Corruption Index)<sup>12</sup>**

Hong Kong	China	Russia	<i>Mongolia</i>	Korea (ROK)	Japan
8.3	3.2	2.4	3	5	7.3

**Demographics of Mongolia**

Mongolia is a relatively youthful country, as it has been for some time. This will decline somewhat in the years ahead, which may bode well for the

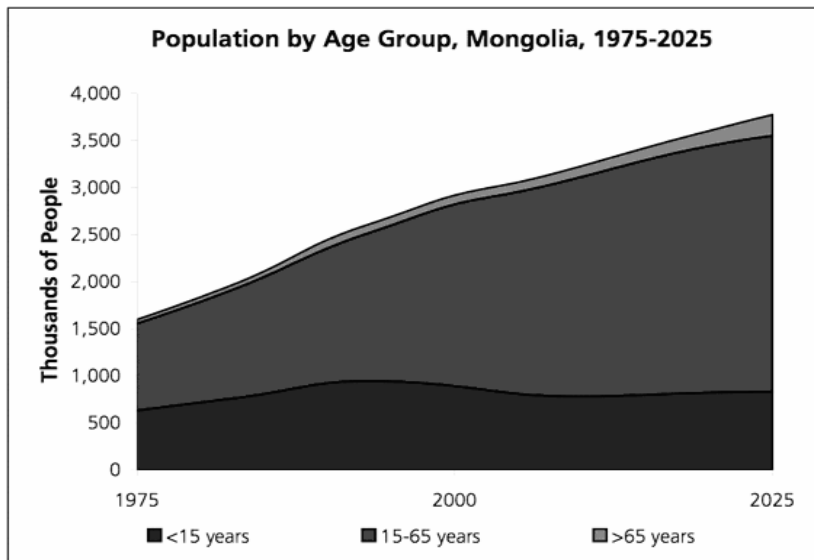
<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> “Mongolia.” Humantrafficking.org. <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/mongolia> (Accessed 2 May 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index 2005. Transparency International. 2005. [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2005](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005). Accessed May 1, 2006.

trafficking situation in the long-term as a smaller youth population will not have to compete for jobs as the current generation must. This reflects an overall trend of slowing population growth, as the government abandoned the socialist policy of encouraging and rewarding high birthrates in families.

**Fig. 8- Age in Mongolia<sup>13</sup>**



What is most important in the chart below is the urbanization percentage. This represents the most transient and economically depressed portion of Mongolian society. The fluctuation in the percentages can be due to the lack of jobs in the cities (primarily in the capital Ulaanbaatar), which in times of recession forces many Mongolians into the countryside to take up more traditional occupations for little or no pay, albeit with enough materials to sustain life. During years of bad weather, dust storms, and harsh winters, the urban population grows significantly, if one considers each percentage point to be equal to around 28,000 people.

<sup>13</sup> "Mongolia." *Earthtrends*. Amsterdam: World Resource Institute, 2005. [http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf\\_library/country\\_profiles/pop\\_cou\\_496.pdf](http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_496.pdf). (Accessed 30 January 2006).

**Fig. 9- Mongolia's Demographic Evolution<sup>14</sup>**

Year	Total	% Male	% Female	% Urban	% under 15	% 15-64	% 65+
1975	1,400,000			48.7			
1995	2,251,300	49.7	50.3	51.9			
1999	2,373,500	49.6	50.4	58.6	35.8	60.7	3.5
2000	2,407,500	49.5	50.5	57.2	33.8	62.7	3.5
2001	2,442,500	49.5	50.5	57.2	32.7	63.7	3.6
2002	2,475,400	49.6	50.4	57.4	32.6	63.9	3.5
2003	2,600,000	49.6	49.6	56.8	32.2	64.7	3.1
2005 est.	2,791,300	49.6	50.4	57.5	28.7	67.7	3.7
2015 est.	3,000,000	~50	~50	59.5	26.3	69.6	4.1

Mongolia has had a very critical housing shortage for some time. The situation has been aggravated since the end of the socialist period, as the government has been unable to undertake new building campaigns. Around all major and even minor cities and provincial centers in Mongolia yurt settlements have been set up, with small plots in which the yurt is erected separated by chaotic fencing made of whatever materials are available. The settlements are illegal, and therefore no sanitation is provided, shallow outhouses in the enclosures being the only facilities available. In Ulaan Baatar, which is ringed by steep hills, these yurt settlements or 'ger suburbs' are increasingly being built on slopes, leading to the problem of toxic runoff. If electricity is present, it is usually illegally obtained, and these yurt slums have no paved roads. These slums around Mongolian cities are generally what await migrants from the countryside.

Migrants from the countryside to the cities have little material wealth, and few job skills. Often they face an unfamiliar job market, and therefore many are unemployed or underemployed for months and sometimes years after migrating. With futures and circumstances as bleak as these, it is little wonder so many young women choose to pursue opportunities abroad.

### **Migration in and out of Mongolia**

When Mongolia's southern border was opened in 1989, over 92% of her trade was with former Soviet Bloc nations and less than 1.5% with her other

<sup>14</sup> Figures compiled from United Nations Development Program. "Statistics." *Human Development Report 2005*. United Nations Development Programme, 2005. <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/>. Accessed May 1, 2006.

neighbour, China. Less than ten years later, the situation had transformed and trade with the former Eastern Bloc had fallen to 25%, while trade with China had grown to over 20% of Mongolia's total. The next year, ten years after the border with China was first opened in more than a generation, trade surpassed volume with the former Soviet Bloc.<sup>15</sup> While trade liberalization has brought Mongolia more opportunities in consumer choice, the open borders and freedom of movement have also brought about a host of new problems such as smuggling, illegal migration, and trafficking.

Since 1990 all Mongolians have had the right to obtain a passport for the purpose of traveling abroad. This was codified December 24, 1993, along with the right to emigrate.<sup>16</sup> Since that time, Mongolians have traveled extensively, and the country has been visited by persons from almost every nation. Below are the top six nations in terms of visitors to Mongolia.

**Fig. 10 - Travel to and from Mongolia<sup>17</sup>**

Country	Inbound			Outbound		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
<b>Total</b>	<b>158,205</b>	<b>192,057</b>	<b>235,165</b>	<b>149,763</b>	<b>190,125</b>	<b>230,346</b>
China	57,546	67,360	92,657	48,024	62,960	90,771
Russia	49,456	66,415	71,368	48,712	62,037	66,985
Japan	11,392	11,565	13,708	13,987	17,576	13,527
South Korea	8,039	10,098	14,536	8,239	10,214	14,392
USA	6,451	6,653	6,860	6,511	7,122	7,058
Germany	4,206	5,388	6,856	4,068	5,869	6,395
<i>Other</i>	<i>21,115</i>	<i>24,578</i>	<i>29,180</i>	<i>20,222</i>	<i>24,347</i>	<i>31,218</i>

It was estimated in 2003 that there were up to 100,000 Mongolians living and working in foreign countries, 43,000 of whom were working there illegally (this represents almost 5% of Mongolia's total economically active population).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Rossabi, Morris. *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Ts. Batbayar. *Foreign Migration Issues in Mongolia*. Monterey: Center for East Asian Studies, 2003. [http://gsti.miiis.edu/CEAS-PUB/2003\\_Batbaya.pdf](http://gsti.miiis.edu/CEAS-PUB/2003_Batbaya.pdf). (Accessed 7 May 2006).

<sup>17</sup> *Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 2002*. Ulaan Baatar: National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 2003. <http://www.nso.mn/eng/emxtgel.php>. Accessed January 28, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Uranstooj, G., Ariunchimeg, L., Tsend-Auysh, D., and Oyunchimeg, P. *The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: the Current Situation*. Ulaan Baatar: National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia and the Centre for Human Rights and Development, November 2002. [www.tipinasia.info/TH/doc-download.php?l=th&id=18](http://www.tipinasia.info/TH/doc-download.php?l=th&id=18). (Accessed 5 May 2006)

Over 17,000 were estimated to be in the Republic of Korea.<sup>19</sup> At the end of 2001 there were 976 Mongolians in the Czech Republic with valid work visas, and thousands more estimated to be otherwise living and working there. Of the Mongolians legally working in the Czech Republic, 69% were women.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Trafficking situation- What is known**

Statistics are difficult to compile and obtain, so perhaps case studies present the best material for understanding the trafficking situation in Mongolia. Only in sensational cases, such as when the victim returns to Mongolia, is the issue recorded. Mongolia, as a “Tier Two” country in the State Department’s 2005 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, is both a country of origin, a transit country, and occasionally a country of destination.

Mongolia shares a 4,678 km. border with China, and a 3,585 km. border with Russia.<sup>21</sup> Only the airport at Ulaanbaatar (to be renamed Chinggis Khaan International) has official international flights, although flights to Kazakhstan are known to leave on occasion from the airport at Olgii. Mongolia has three international railways: one to China in Dornogovi province (at Zamiin Uud), and two to Russia, in Selenge province (at Sukhbaatar) and in Dornod province (at Ereentsav). There are numerous roads and tracks leaving Mongolia, but the two that receive the vast majority of traffic are in Selenge and Dornogovi provinces (to Russia and China, respectively). Through these border crossings, and at various transportation hubs, Mongolian and foreign women and underage girls are increasingly being sent abroad to uncertain fates.

As a destination country, Mongolia has little to offer. Compared with its neighbours Mongolia is not very developed, and outside of a very small elite and ex-patriot community, there are few permanent residents able to afford prostitutes expensive enough to justify their importation. That being said, Chinese women have reportedly been tricked into thinking they were going to

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<sup>19</sup> “Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia.” *Status Report*. Ulaan Baatar: National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, 2003. <http://www.nhrc-mn.org/docs/Annual%202003%20Status%20Report.pdf>. (Accessed 30 January 2006). These numbers seem rather high.

<sup>20</sup> “The Times They are A-Changing.” *Sharing Experience: Migration Trends in Selected Applicant Countries and Lessons Learned from the ‘New Countries of Immigration’ in the EU and Austria*. Vienna: International Organization for Migration, 2004. [http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/IOM\\_II\\_CZ.pdf](http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/IOM_II_CZ.pdf). (Accessed 31 January 2006).

<sup>21</sup> “Mongolia.” *CIA World Factbook*. Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 2006. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mg.html>. (Accessed 5 May 2006).



model in Italy before being forced into prostitution in Mongolia.<sup>22</sup> The International Organization of Migration has also reported Ethiopian women trafficked to Mongolia and forced into nude dancing.<sup>23</sup> Recently the Mongolian government has proposed the building of a casino at Zamiin Uud in hopes of attracting a clientele from China, where gambling is illegal. This would undoubtedly increase prostitution rates in Mongolia, and may increase Mongolia's reputation as a sex tourism destination. Currently Mongolia does have somewhat of a reputation, primarily due to its low reported incidence of HIV/AIDS (only twenty reported cases to date), location, and economic status, although countries such as Cambodia, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines continue to be regarded as the more obvious sex tourism hotspots.

As a transit country Mongolia's status is that of a conduit for women and girls, primarily from China, destined for Russia or the West. In 2002, a Chinese criminal organization concocted a plan to send Chinese women to Russia to work as prostitutes via Mongolia, illustrating Mongolia's possibilities as a transit point for illicit trade between Russia and China. Twenty women were found in the back of a truck in Dornod Aimag (the easternmost Aimag) on that occasion, and the plan was thwarted.

Finally, Mongolia continues to play its largest role in human trafficking as a country of origin. Destination countries are first and foremost China, including Macau and Hong Kong, and South Korea. Various reports also list Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, France, Belgium, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and the former Yugoslavia as destination countries for trafficked Mongolian women.<sup>24</sup>

Mongolia itself, due to the economic hardships the country has endured and the breakdown of the traditional family structure during the socialist era, has generated many prostitutes. Some are part-time prostitutes who sell themselves on occasion in order to supplement their meager incomes, others

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<sup>22</sup> Botti, Anita. "The Trade in Human Beings is a Worldwide Scourge." *International Herald Tribune*. June 1, 2000. <http://www.peace.ca/traffickinginwomenandgirls.htm> (Accessed 8 May 2006).

<sup>23</sup> "New IOM figures on the Global Scale of Trafficking." *Trafficking in Migrants*, No. 23. Geneva: International Organization of Migration, 2001. <http://www.iom.int/documents/publication/en/tm%5F23.pdf> (Accessed 26 January 2006). The writer hereby expresses his doubts as to the veracity of the account.

<sup>24</sup> "Mongolia." Humantrafficking.org, and Uranstooj, G., Ariunchimeg, L., Tsend-Auysh, D., and Oyunchimeg, P. *The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: The Current Situation*.

are full-time prostitutes suffering from drug or alcohol addiction, sexually transmitted diseases (the Mongolian Health Minister recently stated definitively that 58% of the prostitutes in Ulaanbaatar suffer from an STD),<sup>25</sup> and mental instability. In 1997 there were over 1,000 prostitutes registered with the Ulaanbaatar Police Department. In 2002, it was estimated that 200-250 prostitutes in Ulaanbaatar were underage.<sup>26</sup>

The generally held consensus is that South Koreans generally take girls via air, whereas Chinese traffickers generally focus on road and rail networks to move their victims out of the country. Trickery, false visas for richer third countries that the victims never reach (being forced into prostitution in countries along the way, such as in China or Eastern Europe), and the complicity of someone in the trafficked woman's family or circle of friends are all used to spirit girls out of the country. Additionally, many women who prostitute themselves in Mongolia are sent abroad, only to end up forced to work in a brothel with no control over the money or the number or quality of their customers.

Trafficking is by its very nature an ever-changing industry, and new tactics are being exercised by traffickers all the time. Recently two women forced to work as prostitutes in Macao who found their way to the Mongolian consulate in Inner Mongolia told of being forced to undergo breast enlargements at illegal clinics.<sup>27</sup>

Another worrying trend in human trafficking from Mongolia is the use of former victims as traffickers. Mongolian women who have worked for a time in China, Macau, and Hong Kong (so far the only cases of this scheme have been in Chinese territory) are sent back to Mongolia to recruit new women. Enticed with large cash commissions, and having already spent time as sex workers, these women return to their bosses, trade in their new girls, and the cycle repeats itself. The Mongolian government has taken steps and passed laws to prohibit such recruiting, but as long as Mongolia remains one of the least developed countries in the region, these problems will remain.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Distelhorst, Luke. "Mongolian Minister of Health L. Gundalai on HIV/AIDS in Mongolia: An Interview by Luke Distelhorst." *New Eurasia: Country Weblog Mongolia*. Ulaan Baatar: New Eurasia, May 8, 2006. <http://mongolia.neweurasia.net/?p=167>. (Accessed 8 May 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Uranstooj, G., Ariunchimeg, L., Tsend-Auysh, D., and Oyunchimeg, P. *The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: the Current Situation*.

<sup>27</sup> "Mongolia". *Stop the Traffic 2 Conference*.

<sup>28</sup> "Mongolia." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004*. Washington: State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2005. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41652.htm>. (Accessed 29 January 2006).

It has been said that Mongolia is also different from her East Asian neighbours in terms of social permissiveness. To quote the Minister of Health: "...You know Mongolians are so sexually liberal. They sleep with each other like animals. There are no rules or customs in Mongolia. Mongolia is one of the most liberal countries in the world. We are an Asian country, but we are not like other Asian countries in terms of sexual liberties."<sup>29</sup> However, prostitution is still seen as a great shame and fault of the individual prostitute, and this shame and guilt is one of the greatest impediments to the prosecution of trafficking crimes today.

The shame factor works in two ways: it prevents the victims from coming forward to press charges and testify openly, and it provokes distrust and dismissal among Mongolian authorities towards the claims of Mongolian trafficking victims.

### **Threat to the Nation**

Human trafficking poses a threat not only to the trafficked, but to the nation of Mongolia as well. The complicity of officials and the proliferation of criminal trafficking organizations in the country pose a serious threat to law enforcement there.<sup>30</sup> Both foreign and domestic gangs have sprung up in Mongolian cities due to trafficking, and as long as this source of funding is available to them, lawlessness in Mongolia will continue. Not just to prevent trafficking Mongolia must take concrete steps towards the elimination of the culture of corruption that has developed since the end of the socialist era. Whether through increased official pay levels, better training, or anti-corruption campaigns, corruption in Mongolia can and must be reduced if the country is to develop and protect its citizens. To date, the money involved in human trafficking has only made the situation worse.

### **Prosecuting Offenses**

In 2000, the Mongolian government finally made human trafficking a crime, punishable by five to eight years' imprisonment.<sup>31</sup> In 2001 this was amended to ten to fifteen years, and the first prosecution for human trafficking was in that

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<sup>29</sup> Distelhorst, Luke. "Mongolian Minister of Health L. Gundalai on HIV/AIDS in Mongolia: An Interview by Luke Distelhorst." *New Eurasia: Country Weblog Mongolia*.

<sup>30</sup> Uranstooj, G., Ariunchimeg, L., Tsend-Auysh, D., and Oyunchimeg, P. *The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: the Current Situation*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

year, against a Japanese businessman.<sup>32</sup> One of the first successful prosecutions was of a former Soviet bloc citizen for trafficking two Mongolian women via China to the former Yugoslavia.<sup>33</sup>

Another Chinese citizen was arrested and tried in 2001, and eventually deported for attempting to traffic four Mongolian women to Macau to work as prostitutes. What makes the case disturbing was that even after the Chinese man confessed to the authorities, he was not given a prison term.<sup>34</sup>

Since 2001 the law has been used with increasing frequency, however. In 2003 there were fourteen prosecutions of human traffickers in Mongolian courts, and two persons were denied entry into the country on suspicion of being involved in trafficking activities (surprisingly one of whom was British). In 2004, however, possibly due to the political crisis, only four cases were filed, and none were successfully prosecuted.<sup>35</sup> Often this is due to either the reluctance of the witnesses to testify, whether because of intimidation or shame, or the lack of cooperation from the criminal justice system.

Cases where the accusers are the women themselves are often denied a fair hearing in Mongolia. The reasons given are that it is the word of one party against another, and that the women are or were prostitutes, and therefore of low moral character and not to be believed.

### **Recommendations**

Despite having at present an absolute per capita GDP of \$514 US (lower than India and the Sudan),<sup>36</sup> Mongolia is one of the largest per capita development aid receivers in the world. In 2003 alone Mongolia was given 247 million dollars (US), or almost \$1,000 US for every man, woman and child in the country (equal to approximately 21% of the country's GNI).<sup>37</sup> Even if no Mongolian did anything for an entire year besides cash one aid check, the people would still be richer, in absolute dollar terms, than Paraguay, Azerbaijan,

<sup>32</sup> "Mongolia." Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2005. U.S. State Department. <http://gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Mongolia-2.htm>. (Accessed 7 May 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Uranstooj, G., Ariunchimeg, L., Tsend-Auysh, D., and Oyunchimeg, P. The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: the Current Situation.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2005. U.S. State Department.

<sup>36</sup> "Statistics." Human Development Report 2005. United Nations Development Programme,

<sup>37</sup> "Landlocked developing countries ODA received." United Nations Statistics Division. [http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi\\_series\\_results.asp?rowId=632](http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_series_results.asp?rowId=632). (Accessed 3 May 2006).

and the Philippines. Clearly, a significant portion of the aid is not reaching its intended recipients, and given that, this writer is loath to call for increased aid to meet the challenges posed by human trafficking in Mongolia.

What can be done is simple in proposal, but difficult in implementation. Potential victims must be educated to the dangers of trafficking, and traffickers must be prosecuted with the utmost severity. Mongolia, as a nation, must educate itself to the dangers posed by human trafficking, both to the individual young women involved, and to the state itself. Mongolia should sign and ratify the UN's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons (it has so far signed and ratified all other relevant international anti-trafficking measures), in order to bring itself into full compliance with international norms and make itself eligible for assistance in the form of training from the U.S. and other interested parties, should such assistance prove necessary.<sup>38</sup>

In the schools Mongolia can seek to better educate its youngest and most vulnerable sectors of society as to the danger of human trafficking, and seek to eliminate the shame associated with trafficking's victims. Mongolian children and especially young women must be made aware of the tricks and tactics used by traffickers to entrap their victims. At least one lesson should be included in every social studies curriculum on the dangers of trafficking in secondary schools in the eighth form (the last required year of schooling in Mongolia). In addition, women who have been trafficked and are willing to come forward should be encouraged to speak to adolescents at schools and youth camps across the country about their experiences, so as to lessen the stigma attached and to share their knowledge. Similar to the American program "Scared Straight" (begun in the 1970s and aimed at juvenile delinquents this program sought to discourage harmful behavior by having felons speak to the youngsters about prison and other difficulties in a life of crime), the opportunity to speak with trafficked women and former prostitutes may give young Mongolian girls pause for thought before going abroad and some insight into the wiles of traffickers so that they may better recognize them.

### **Conclusion**

Trafficking in Mongolia is a serious problem, and it is getting worse. Insufficient attention has been paid to it, and Mongolia is paying the price. Economic development is the only viable and sustainable long-term solution to

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<sup>38</sup> "Mongolia." Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2005. U.S. State Department.

the dilemma posed by trafficking, but certain measures can be taken now, and should be. To prevent trafficked women coming into Mongolia, either as a country of destination or as a transit country, border security should be increased and corrupt officials must be terminated.

In the case of women trafficked from Mongolia, money and manpower are not necessary to alleviate the situation; only attention and study will lessen the danger. Additionally, Mongolians must overcome the shame and dishonor associated with the trafficked and prostitution, and learn to take their claims more seriously.

Mongolia is a country famed for its hospitality and freedoms. But in a free society there can be dangers in exercising one's freedom without knowing all the facts. This heretofore unknown nontraditional security threat in Mongolia warrants closer attention and serious counter-measures if it is to be effectively combated.