

IRELAND

Statement from Joint NGO Group concerned with Trafficking in Human Beings 18th June, 2007

We are concerned with attempts by a US State Department report to minimise Ireland's challenges with the issue of Trafficking in Human Beings. We refer to the recently published Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report 2007 (US State Department).

We must question how the US State Department received and composed this information – and stress that such inaccurate information serves no purpose for Ireland - either nationally or internationally.

In our considered view, this year's TIP Report departs from standards of objectivity and lacks a checking of data, thereby drawing inaccurate conclusions.

The document refers to Ireland as a 'potential problem' and says there are 'only a small number of cases.' We wish to dispute this comment it is simply not factual based on information available to all relevant agencies. This may be in reference to the number of prosecutions but it does not refer to the cases presented to NGOs or cases investigated. There is definitive evidence to show that well over 100 people have been trafficked into Ireland for sexual exploitation and forced labour.

This report has not highlighted the current legislative vacuum in Ireland in relation to trafficking, nor does it include the fact that the Criminal Justice (Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Offences Bill) 2006 was sent to the Irish Human Rights Commission to assess its compatibility with Ireland's obligations to Human Rights standards.

The report also refers to a figure of €580,000 being provided by the Government to 'a local NGO' to fund victim care and living expenses while victims await court appearances'. We are not aware of any such figure being provided for this purpose.

Our main concern around this report is that it does not reflect the reality of trafficking of persons into Ireland - as experienced by those organisations who work in this and related fields.

Issued by the following groups:

(Contact details of spokespersons alongside individual organisations)

Ruhama – Gerardine Rowley – 086 2591247

Amnesty International – Fiona Crowley – 01 6776361 / 087 2505551

CORI Ad Hoc Working Group on Trafficking – Maura O Donohue –085
7161916

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland – Delphine O’Keeffe- 087 241 0039

National Women’s Council – Joanna McMinn – 01 8787248

European Women’s Lobby (EWL) – Grainne Healy – 087 2473286

EWL’s Irish Observatory on Violence against Women – Monica O Connor – 01 8787248

Notes to the Editor:

- ❖ **The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report 2007** –
<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/86204.htm>
Released by the US State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons June 12, 2007
 - On Page **218** , Ireland is highlighted under the ‘special cases’ section.
 - On page **7** , it quotes that during 2006 ‘Zambian girls were trafficked to Ireland for commercial sexual exploitation.’
 - On page **134** , it states that ‘Men and women from Latvia are trafficked to Ireland and the United Kingdom for the purpose of forced labor.’

- ❖ **The Irish Human Rights Commission** - Observations on the Criminal Justice (Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Offences)Bill 2007
http://www.ihrc.ie/fileupload/banners/Observations_on_the_scheme_of_the_Criminal_JusticeTPSOBill.doc
The conclusions of the Irish Human Rights Commission on the Criminal Justice (Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Offences) Bill 2006 are published in this submission.
The Criminal Justice (Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Offences Bill) 2006 was found incompatible with Ireland’s obligations to protect victims of trafficking and prompted grave concerns by the Irish Human Rights Commission.

Contact: Liam Herrick – IHRC

- ❖ **2000 – 2006 Statistics from Ruhama**
(Ruhama is a Dublin based NGO that has worked with women involved in prostitution for the past 18 years)
Ruhama is aware of over 200 women who have been trafficked into Ireland for the purposes of sexual exploitation; having contact with almost 150 women in

its service delivery. Ruhama believes this is only the tip of the iceberg, given the clandestine nature of trafficking.

❖ **Report by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland**

<http://www.mrci.ie/publications/documents/NoWayForwardNoGoingBack.Foreword.ExecSummary.pdf>

No Way Forward, No Going Back: Identifying the problem of trafficking for forced labour in Ireland (2007)

This report provides an overview of the situation with regard to trafficking for forced labour in Ireland, in sectors other than for sexual exploitation.