



Afghanistan: Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 30 September 2010

How widespread is child prostitution in Afghanistan?

The *United States Department of States's* annual report on human rights in Afghanistan states:

"Sexual exploitation of boys, reportedly more widespread than sexual exploitation of girls, occurred in every region of the country, and internal trafficking was more widespread than cross-border trafficking. The MOI reported 75 cases of trafficking during the year.

The government took steps during the year regarding legislation, prosecution, prevention, and protection. In April the IOM and MOI signed an agreement establishing a cooperative framework to combat trafficking and assist victims of trafficking and other vulnerable migrants, expanding activities to six provinces: Nangahar, Helmand, Nimroz, Herat, Balkh, and Kunduz.

The IOM provided the MOI with countertrafficking technical support and capacity building, as well as help for victims. The IOM trained multiple law enforcement sectors, including the MOI, MOJ, ANA, ANP, border police, security agents, and the special unit for combating trafficking. The IOM assisted the MOI in developing a database on trafficking and organized crime and trained MOJ officials and judges, including members of the Supreme Court, in prosecution protocols in the six provinces.

The MOWA cooperated with NGOs that provide counseling and shelter to victims of trafficking. The IOM, in partnership with local NGOs, established the only shelter for victims of trafficking, providing reintegration assistance, including education and income-generating training." (US Department of State (11 March 2010) *Afghanistan: "Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2009"*)

A report from *Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict* states:

"Despite low reported prevalence rates, experts warn that armed conflict exacerbates risk factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan. In particular, criminal networks are likely to exploit the vulnerable situation of orphans and street children, forcing them into prostitution or introducing them to drugs. For instance, street children are regularly forced to earn a living as sex workers without protecting themselves from sexually transmitted infections, according to UNICEF. Out of school youth rarely receive vital education messages regarding the prevention of HIV/AIDS, according to UNODC. Inadequate health facilities during birth have also intensified the risk of mother to child transmission." (Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (14 June 2010) *Afghanistan:*

"Setting the Right Priorities: Protecting Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Afghanistan)

The *United States Department of State's* annual report on human trafficking in Afghanistan states:

"Afghan boys and girls are trafficked within the country for forced prostitution and forced labor in brick kilns, carpet-making factories, and domestic service. Forced begging is a growing problem in Afghanistan; Mafia groups organize professional begging rings. Afghan boys are subjected to forced prostitution and forced labor in the drug smuggling industry in Pakistan and Iran." (United States Department of State (14 June 2010) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010 – Afghanistan*)

A report on from *UN High Commissioner for Refugees* states:

"Incidents of sexual violence against children and cases of impunity of perpetrators have increased since December 2007. In March and April 2008, both the AIHRC and the Afghan Women Network (AWN) reported an increase in child rape and.188 According to the Institute of War and Peace Reporting, the abduction of children for sexual exploitation has continued to increase, particularly in the North.189 In this respect, it is worth mentioning the practice of bacha bazi (boy play), i.e. keeping young boys for sexual pleasure, particularly by older and powerful men. This is a practice that has a degree of social acceptance and may be a flaunted symbol of status, as boys (known as halekon in the South of the country, and bacha bi reesh, "boys without beards" in other areas)190 are sometimes shared with other men at parties and gatherings. Children subjected to this practice need to be considered by adjudicators as victims and survivors of rape, rather than persons freely exercising a sexual preference. In most of the cases, children are driven into this practice by poverty, coercion or force." (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (July.2009) *Afghanistan: "UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan"*)

A 2006 report from Child Rights Information Network states:

"There are traditional precedents for 'accepted' child abuse. Reports of men using young boys for sexual gratification are well known and talked about3 . Traditionally, 'keeping' goodlooking boys adds status and prestige to the man, and adds to his image (self or imposed) of virility. Under the Taliban, a strict ban on homosexuality made more overt aspects of practise go underground. However, the practice of boys under 18 being brought to parties for entertainment is reported to still be taking place in some rural areas and in and around Kandahar" (Child Rights Information Network (22 March 2006) *Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan: "Mapping of Psycho-Social Support for Boys and Girls Affected by Child Sexual Abuse in Four Countries in South and Central Asia"*)

References

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Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
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US Department of State

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.