OVERVIEW

5th GLOBAL REPORT ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

WWW.FONDATIONSCELLES.ORG
fondationscelles@wanadoo.fr | +33 1 40 26 04 45 | @Fond_Scelles
How must we respond to new challenges imposed by the trivialization and the development of sexual exploitation in the world, when the number of vulnerabilities have never been so high, the violence and discrimination as intense, and the opportunities of expansion so important for the market of human beings?
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KEY FIGURES

PROSTITUTED PERSONS

**LAWS IMPACT**
- Abolitionist Countries: 35,000
- Regulationist Countries: 200,000 to 400,000

**VICTIMS**
- 80% of prostituted persons want to leave prostitution
- 90% have been subjected to sexual violence
- 75% have been raped during their activity
- 48% of human trafficking victims are minors
- 2/3 of prostitution is online

**SEX BUYERS**
- 39% of men have already paid for sexual acts
- 9 million are or have been sex buyers

**INCOME FROM PROSTITUTION**
- €90 million monthly income for the underground economy (including prostitution)
- €14.6 billion revenue of prostitution
- €12 to 18 billion

**PROSTITUTED PERSONS MORTALITY RATE**
- 10 to 40 times above the average

**FONDATION SCELLES - Global Report on Sexual Exploitation - Overview - June 2019**
The Fondation Scelles launches its 5th Global Report on Sexual Exploitation
“Sexual Exploitation: New Challenges, New Answers”

Through an in-depth assessment inventory of 35 countries and the study of recent major trends, the 5th Global Report of the Fondation Scelles “SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: New Challenges, New Answers” provides the latest overview of sexual exploitation at regional and global levels.

The latest edition, written by the International Observatory of the Fondation Scelles, sets out not only the 6 major challenges to be met in view of the latest developments and their impact, but also the 6 concrete answers to a criminal phenomenon that is intensifying, particularly as a result of geopolitical chaos in certain areas of the planet and is renewing itself in modern forms, adapted to new information and communication technologies.

While the resources devoted to the fight against sexual exploitation remain very limited and the debate is becoming more radical, the influence of a current “pro-sex work” trend aimed at concealing the inherent violence in the phenomenon, throughout the world, prostituted persons are marginalized and stigmatized. Everywhere, children, adolescents and young adults are the first to be affected; Sugar babies in Canada, street children in Brazil or South Africa, victims of sex tourism in the Balkan countries. Everywhere, migrant populations, driven out by poverty, political or military conflicts, persecution, natural disasters, are prey to criminal networks that prostitute them on migration routes on refugee camps or in our cities.

In the wake of the #Metoo movement, these new challenges require States and authoritative figures in society to provide a rapid collective response. Several approaches are proposed in this 5th Report, including international and multidisciplinary cooperation to prevent, prosecute and condemn the commodification of human beings, but also, the development of the Nordic model that is proving its worth through the protection of victims and the criminalization of traffickers -procurers and sex buyers, the raising of social awareness and the training of professionals, and the establishment of Internet governance, the misuse of which offers tremendous facilities and the opportunity for increased profits for the sexual exploitation industry.

As an effective information, warning, and response tool, the new Global Report on Sexual Exploitation is fully in line with programs developed by the Fondation Scelles to change attitudes, protect the most vulnerable and combat procuring and demand.
Since 2012, the Fondation Scelles’ Global Report on Sexual Exploitation, this “travel” around the world has aimed to detect and anticipate new trends. Already, in the previous 4 editions, the country-by-country study and analysis of the main trends in sexual exploitation confirm the growing threats to our societies.

What can we see today?

► Worldwide, prostituted persons are stigmatized and marginalized.

► Worldwide, the primary victims of this sexual exploitation are children, adolescents, and young adults: Canadian sugar babies, street children from Brazil or South Africa, Parisian “michettones” or victims of sex tourism in Thailand. Although the phenomenon is not new, it is renewed and intensified today under modern forms, which have adapted to new technologies.

► Worldwide, migrant populations, driven out by poverty, political or military conflicts, persecution, natural disasters, are the prey of criminal networks who prostitute them on migration routes, in refugee camps or in our cities.

► Never have the factors of vulnerability been so numerous and human beings exploitation so intense, even as gender relations are at the centre of many debates.

In the context of the migration crisis and the liberation of speech generated by the #MeToo movement in different parts of the world, what can we say about sexual exploitation today? What are the new emerging trends? What answers have our societies offered?
Sexual exploitation continues to grow dangerously, particularly as a result of geopolitical chaos in some parts of the world, and to be renewed in modern forms, adapted to new information and communications technologies.

The 5th Global Report of the Fondation Scelles identifies the 12 major issues to come:

- The 6 major challenges to be addressed in view of the latest developments and their impact
- The 6 concrete answers to a growing criminal phenomenon.

The new challenges

1. **A cycle of violence**  
   Violence from sex buyers, traffickers, procurers, society, governments. Everywhere, sexual exploitation is a systematic exploitation.

2. **First victims: minors and young adults**  
   Sugar babies, victims of loverboys or procurer boyfriends, street children, escorts... victims are getting increasingly younger.

3. **The vulnerability of migrants**  
   One in two migrants is a woman or a minor, often alone, overexposed to the risks of sexual exploitation throughout their journey.

4. **Technological progress in the service of exploitation**  
   Online prostitution is rapidly growing, traffickers and procurers are recruiting on the Internet, the market for sex dolls and sex robots is exploding.

5. **A lack of means**  
   Globally, the lack of resources allocated to the fight against sexual exploitation, prostitution and trafficking in human beings is obvious.

6. **A debate in the process of radicalization**  
   A powerful trend in favour of “sex work” masks the reality of sexual exploitation under the illusion of glamour and modernity.

The new answers

1. **Initiate the governance of Internet**  
   Nation states are becoming aware of the phenomenon, adopting laws, closing e-platforms. We must go further.

2. **Act together**  
   An international response to a transnational crime phenomenon: police and judicial cooperation, networks of information exchange.

3. **Abolish borders**  
   Adopt extraterritorial criminal laws to compensate for the inadequacy of repressive laws in some countries.

4. **Train and raise awareness**  
   Raise the awareness of society and train professionals (judiciary, police, tourism...) to further the fight against sexual exploitation.

5. **Reverse the criminal charge**  
   A single course of action: adopt the Nordic model which recognizes prostituted persons as victims and criminalizes the purchase of sexual acts.

6. **Restore the reality and priorities**  
   Prostitution is neither work nor sex: it is the commodification of the human being.
The analysis of sexual exploitation in 35 countries enables to establish a precise overview of the situation by state and region of the world.

The lessons to take away from the harsh assessment this report presents, are:

- **THE UNIVERSALITY** of sexual exploitation
- **THE NORMALIZATION** of prostitution increasingly seen as a market like any other
- **THE EXPANSION** of an industry with profits multiplied by the perverted use of the tremendous opportunities offered by internet.
An overview of the applicable laws in the world (grouped into 5 types) and an analysis of their impact on sexual exploitation helps to shed light on the debate and to better understand the merit of French law strengthening the fight against the system of prostitution, and the relevance of the Nordic model.

**LEGISLATIVE MODELS**

- **Prostitution is tolerated, procurers and sex buyers are penalized (Nordic Model)**
- **Prostitution is tolerated with legal restrictions, procurers are penalized**
- **Prostitution is tolerated without legal restrictions, procurers are penalized**
- **Prostitution is regulated by an administrative authority**
- **All forms of prostitution are illegal**

**GERMANY**

- **Reglementarism**

  Germany passed a law in 2002 that regulated prostitution. As a result, prostitution has become a profession in its own right, with brothel managers being described as mere businessmen and prostituted people being described as “sex workers.”

  As part of the transposition of Council of Europe Directive 2011/36 EU into national law (expected since April 2013), several articles relating to human trafficking within the Criminal Code were amended in October 2016. The law now covers new forms of...

**FRANCE**

- **Nordic Model**

  Law number 2016-444, “aiming to reinforce the fight against the system of prostitution and to care for prostituted persons,” was adopted on April 13th, 2016, and is defined by four main axis of action:
  - the support of prostituted persons and the establishment of a exit path out of prostitution;
  - the prohibition of the purchase of sexual acts and the penalization of sex buyers of prostitution;
  - the reinforcement of the fight against procuring, in particular procuring on the internet; ...

**INDIA**

- **Abolitionism**

  In India, prostitution is legal if the prostituted person is of legal age and if they are not prostituted in a public place. As for trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, adopted in 1956 and amended and modified in both 1986 and 2006, provides the general legislative framework and penalizes a number of stakeholders. Thus, any individual who owns or manages a brothel faces a sentence of between two to seven years in prison, and any person who recruits, transports, or receives a person for prostitution faces a term of...

**SOUTH AFRICA**

- **Prohibitionism**

  Prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes are regulated by three laws in South Africa.

  The Sexual Offences Act 23 of 1957 condemns all activities related to brothel-keeping, procuring, and prostitution.

  The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 criminalized solicitation.

  Lastly, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 criminalized the purchase of sexual acts and human trafficking for...

**ARGENTINA**

- **Abolitionist Regime with prohibitionist and/or regulationist components in some provinces or cities**

  Since 1936, the law aiming to limit the spread of sexually transmitted diseases prohibits, in its Article 15, establishments or premises engaged in prostitution activities. The regulation of prostitution itself is left to the discretion of the provinces. As a result, different models can be observed, depending on the region. The province of Tucumán chose to prohibit all activities related to prostitution, be it solicitation (Article 92), the purchase of sexual services (Article...
NEW CHALLENGES - EXAMPLES

YOUNG VICTIMS, YOUNG PROCURERS AND YOUNG SEX BUYERS

Minors and young adults today are the first victims of prostitution

Fostered by precariousness, technological progress, the influence of pornography and the "glamorization" of prostitution, the forms of exploitation are diverse: sugar babies or street children, escorts or victims of sex tourism, sexual bartering, monetary exchange, but also sexual blackmail (sextortion), child marriages...

Young people are also protagonists of this exploitation as procurers and sex buyers

Manipulative boyfriends or loverboys who seduce young girls, often minors, and force them into prostitution, are active in Germany, in the Netherlands, in France, in Canada, in India and in the Balkan countries. In addition to this, more and more young people are visiting the brothels, alone or in gangs, to assert their virility.

FRANCE 10% of prostituted persons began their activity when they were minors: 39% are between 18 and 24 years old (p. 89).

CANADA The average age of entry into prostitution is 13 years old (p. 196).

48% of human trafficking victims in Europe are minors (p. 94).

FRANCE « Michetonnage », the practice of female teenagers, often from impoverished outlying districts, which consists of deceiving an older man into believing in a romantic relationship in order to obtain gifts or invitations (p. 90).

The average age of first contact with PORNOGRAPHY is 11 years old in the USA, 14 years old in France (p.84).

JAPON Joshi Kosei are young high school girls employed by dating agencies, who offer paid services to men to chat or walk with them. However, walks usually end in a love hotel for paid sexual acts (p. 305).

ARGENTINA 8% of adolescents between 14 and 19 years old are married or in a serious relationship (p. 153).

CHINA « Soft drink prostitution »: men parked outside university campuses, place a bottle on the roof of their vehicle indicating that they are looking for female students for paid sexual acts (p. 210).

SPAIN « In brothels of La Jonquera(…), the use of a prostituted person is for some young people a rite of passage in the adult world, but also in that of heteronormal virility » (p. 393).

TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN THE SERVICE OF EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation has been present on the web for a long time

2/3 of prostitution activities are based on new technologies. Websites, escorting catalogues, online advertising platforms, sex-tours, forums, social networks, are used by procurers, traffickers, pedophiles to attract and recruit their prey, then expose and sell them to other predators.

Despite the strengthening of laws, this digital sexual exploitation is expanding rapidly. While the Internet must obviously remain free and open, the responsibility of the protagonists will be necessary to stem this exploitation.

73% of women say they have been victims of ONLINE VIOLENCES (p. 31).

FRANCE « There are platforms such as Escort, which has more than 70,000 members and allows sex buyers (prostitutors) to publish comments of incredible violence with impunity » (p. 38).

FRANCE « Procuring in suburbans areas’, a simple variant of cyberprocuring »: the recruitment (14% of victims identified in 2016) is now done through the digital networks Facebook and Snapchat (p. 34).
A CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Everywhere, prostitution is the same system of violence and exploitation:

- **Physical violence, sexual abuse or precarious economic and social situation** are the cause of the entrance and then the subsequent retention of women in prostitution.
- **Violence by sex buyers, traffickers, procurers**
- **Violence in society:** attacks and insults of passersby, police harassment etc.
- **Violence by governments** which, in some countries, still consider prostitution as a social plague to be eradicated.

- Of the 678 femicides committed in **Spain** between 2010 and 2015, 31 are related to the victim’s prostitution activity (p. 395).
- **Ukraine** Almost half of prostituted people say they have been victims of violence during their activity: verbal and physical abuse, humiliation, theft, rape, torture etc. (p. 423).
- **China** Prostituted persons are liable to penalties in administrative detention centers and mandatory «detention and education» programs on the same basis as their sex buyers (p. 208).
- **Malawi** Prostituted persons are liable to fines for being «undesirable» or for vagrancy (p. 332).
- **Morocco** Considered “impure” and “depraved”, prostituted persons are subject to strong social stigmatization (p. 351).
- **Canada** Native women in Alberta represent 5% of the province’s population and 60% of prostituted persons in the street (p. 201).

CONFLICTS AND MIGRATION AS A BREEDING GROUND FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- Despite the protection of international humanitarian law, armed conflicts, natural disasters, ethnic discrimination and migration are accompanied by sexual violence, sometimes systematic.
- Women and girls in particular, but also young boys, are an overexposed population at risk of sexual assault, forced marriage, prostitution, rape, trafficking in human beings etc.

- During the conflicts as well as on the migration route, women and children bodies become a commodity exploited by soldiers, smugglers and traffickers etc.

- About 5,000 women enslaved by the **Islamic State** (p. 105).
- **Missing** of nearly 10,000 migrant children in Europe in 2016, probably victims of exploitation networks (Europol, p. 94).
- The phenomenon of **Refugee Porn**: pornographic films, broadcast on the Internet, feature refugee women, subjected to acts of humiliation inflicted by Caucasian men. There were 800,000 requests in Germany in September 2017 and over 80,000 replies on the Google search engine (p. 251).
- **In Berlin**, security guards in migrant shelters encouraged male refugee to prostitute themselves. The victims were often minors because, as one security guard explained, «the younger they are, the more expensive it is» (p. 251).
ADAPTED LEGISLATIVE ANSWERS

The effort of States to address sexual exploitation phenomena are evident. Even if policies do not always seem coherent, main lines of action of legislative responses have emerged and shown their effectiveness:

► The establishment of extraterritorial criminal laws to prosecute tourists suspected of sexual crimes against minors in their countries of origin;

► The agreement of multilateral or bilateral legal assistance between countries to facilitate police and judicial cooperation and information exchange;

► The implementation of the Nordic model which recognizes prostituted persons as victims and criminalizes the purchase of sexual acts. Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Canada, Northern Ireland, France, Ireland and most recently, Israel have adopted this model. The fight against sexual exploitation can only be successful when the Nordic model has become an international norm.

THE NECESSARY GOVERNANCE OF THE INTERNET

► Over the past few months, awareness of online sexual exploitation has increased and the authorities are beginning to take hold of these issues.

► The responsibility of the platforms, which can facilitate the perpetration of these violations, is now targeted. In the USA, the adoption of the FOSTA-SESTA law has enabled authorities to implicate liability of the website Backpage which offered dating service and paid sexual services. In France, an online advertising platform is being prosecuted for aggravated procuring.

USA The Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA), including the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA), enacted in April 2018, requires online service and ad providers to be responsible for illegal content on their websites (p. 443).

FRANCE Article 67 of the Law for a digital Republic (n.2016-1321, February 7th, 2016) introduces the repression of Revenge porn (p. 34).

FRANCE Vivastreet, French 2nd largest online ad site, with 35 million visits per month, based in Jersey, is suspected of being the facilitator of a more or less disguised prostitution, in its section «Erotica», which represents between 40 and 50% of the website’s revenue (p. 241).
A CHANGE IN MENTALITIES

► While 67% of identified victims of human trafficking are sexually exploited, at both European and global level, the phenomenon is not being adequately and fully tackled.

► On the contrary, the media is dominated by the speeches of a powerful movement that views prostitution as “sex work” and a form of consensual and alternative sexuality.

► Prostitution is neither work nor sex but the commodification of the human body and a violation of women's dignity. After a few years, prostituted persons suffer the same traumas as those who returned from the extermination camps of the Second World War. It is no coincidence that people exiting prostitution refer to themselves as « survivors ».

► Today, these women who have survived prostitution violence are breaking out of silence to tell their stories. It is through the voices of survivors that society will become aware of the realities of a phenomenon that causes more victims each year in France and around the world.

► « IF PROSTITUTION WERE A MATTER OF FREE AND INDIVIDUAL CHOICE, then there would be as many Italian men on the streets of Benin City in Nigeria as there are Nigerian prostituted women on the streets of Turin in Italy » (p. 54).

► FRANCE Involvement of women survivors of prostitution in training awareness sessions for sex buyers (arrested by the police for purchasing sexual acts) rarely remain indifferent to the victim’s background » (p. 72).
THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY: A UNIQUE EXPERTISE

The International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation, Fondation Scelles’ Research Center, elaborates the Global Report on Sexual Exploitation, in collaboration with internal and external experts (magistrates, lawyers, social workers, NGO leaders,…) and with the support of privileged contacts with local NGOs and international researchers.

RELIABLE INFORMATION

➤ MORE THAN 25 YEARS’ EXPERIENCE in monitoring and analyzing information on all prostitution-related phenomena

➤ A VAST NETWORK of local and international correspondents NGOs, universities, journalists, embassies, etc.

➤ A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES
  • The rich and varied documentary database of the Fondation Scelles: institutional reports, NGOs’ studies and findings, international organization reports, university research, press articles, opinion surveys, internet, blogs, videos, documentaries, etc.
  • Specific sources: international press review, studies, national and international reports, information provided by correspondents

A PRECISE AND OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

➤ VERIFIED DATA AND COMPARED SOURCES

➤ CONTEXTUALIZED INFORMATION
  Facts set in a social, cultural and geopolitical context to better understand the phenomenon of prostitution and provide appropriate answers.

➤ A GLOBAL AND OBJECTIVE APPROACH to the facts.

AN INTERNATIONAL AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

➤ EXPERTS FROM MANY COUNTRIES
  Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zambia, etc.

➤ FIELD PROFESSIONALS
  Magistrates, lawyers, social workers, NGO leaders, trainers, etc

➤ RESEARCHERS FROM VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS
  Political science, international relations, human rights, sociology, geopolitics, public affairs, criminology, philosophy, anthropology, economics, etc.
The Observatory is a forum for information exchanges on commercial sexual exploitation in the world.

It aims to:

- Analyzing all aspects of the phenomenon: prostitution, sex tourism, procurement, child pornography, sex buyers, human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, etc.
- Encouraging reflection and position statement
- Informing the public interested in these issues.

It is regularly consulted by French and foreign experts, NGOs, institutions, journalists, lawyers, researchers and those involved in the defense of human rights.

OBSERVATORY : 4 ACTIVITIES

PRODUCTION
Analyses & Publications

1. Global Report on sexual exploitation
2. Expert Notes
3. « Les Cahiers de la Fondation Scelles »
4. Articles published on our website & in specialist journals

RESOURCE CENTER
Collection & Processing of information

1. More than 10 000 documents: analyses, studies, reports, theses, press articles, activity reports, etc. are available on the online database
2. Multimedia Library: more than 500 books, 450 videos
3. Tools and best practices on prevention, information & awareness raising, assistance and protection, rehabilitation, training, transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation, repression, legislation.

USE OF INFORMATION
The Observatory Selection

1. News Analysis and annual compilation of press articles regarding prostitution and human trafficking
2. Critical Analysis on new publications on the system of prostitution
3. Multimedia documentary files
4. Selection of reports and research studies recommended by the Observatory

EXPERTISE
Restitution, Recommendations & Partnerships

1. Conferences, speeches on issues concerning commercial sexual exploitation
2. Training for lawyers, police officers, social workers, etc.
3. Consulting and assistance (theses, essays, etc.)
For more than 25 years, the Fondation Scelles, a recognized public benefit foundation based in Paris, has been fighting against the system of prostitution and the exploitation of the most vulnerable people. International Observatory specialized in monitoring and analyzing prostitution-related phenomena, the Fondation Scelles is also a key player in awareness-raising and prevention, advocacy and mobilization against sexual exploitation.

WHY COMBAT THE SYSTEM OF PROSTITUTION?

The system of prostitution is a violation of human dignity and rights, a form of violence, a global organized crime that exploits the most vulnerable people and involves the unacceptable trafficking of human beings.

Focusing our work on 6 actions

#1 We raise awareness and change attitudes
- Informing the public
- Mobilizing les media
- Training professionals & leaders
- Providing tools for understanding

#2 We protect target groups and victims
- Developing prevention and education programs
- Supporting full decriminalization of and alternatives for victims
- Bringing justice to victims through criminal proceedings

#3 We influence public leaders
- Advocating for the adoption of efficient domestic abolitionist laws
- Obtaining the implementation of international standards

#4 We disrupt the criminal organizations behind it
- Bringing legal and court actions
- Developing international legal cooperation

#5 We combat demand for sexual acts
- Supporting the penalization of the purchase of sexual acts
- Providing awareness-raising programs for sex buyers

#6 We bring together main actors and expertise
- Enlisting a global engagement
- Developing transnational cooperations with all sectors of society
- Sharing good practices
Driving change of society

Year after year, the Fondation Scelles helps change society by fighting for the rights of women and those who are the most vulnerable, by combating discrimination, inequality and violence against women and girls.

Building progressive and feminist policies through the adoption and implementation in France of the historic law of 13 April 2016 after a long advocacy fight within the abolitionist movement.

Spreading the abolitionist word and values worldwide and disseminating the French law abroad.

Placing our fight in the broader context of gender inequality and sexism, because prostitution and violence against women are not a group of isolated events but a social phenomenon.

Supporting the global social movement #MeToo and the new social standards regarding gender relations for a change in vision.

Strengthening our actions with public and private

Since 1994, the Fondation Scelles has been working with national and international public and private organizations to build and implement strategies to tackle sexual exploitation.

The Fondation Scelles belongs to different groups working against sexual exploitation and regularly establishes new partnerships to carry out effective preventive and enforcement measures: CAP International - Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (27 NGOs), European Civil Society Platform against Human Trafficking (more than 100 NGOs), the French Collective against Human Trafficking, Abolition 2012 French Collective (62 NGOs), strategic partnerships with the French Ministry of Justice, the French Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the French Permanent Mission to the UN, domestic and international law firms, high technology companies, foreign NGOs, etc.

The Fondation Scelles is a founding member of the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, CAP International, which was launched in 2013 and today brings together 27 abolitionist NGOs worldwide.

CAP International, is an advocacy vehicle for frontline NGOs and a global convener for change.

CAP International and its members stand in support of all women, men and children affected by prostitution, and in opposition to the system of prostitution that exploits their precariousness and vulnerabilities.

The fundamental objective of CAP International is to advocate for the adoption and implementation of progressive domestic policies and international standards.
This is the fifth edition of our Global Report on sexual exploitation around the world.

Our main goal is, even more so than for the previous reports, to bring a sense of urgency to our readers, highlighting the realities, developments, and impacts of this growing criminal phenomenon.

Through reading about the situations of 35 countries and 11 topical themes, these are the lessons to take away from the harsh assessment this report presents: the universality of exploitation, the normalization of prostitution increasingly seen as a market like any other, and the expansion of an industry with profits multiplied by the perverted use of the tremendous opportunities offered by internet.

Despite the varied, sometimes contradictory and too often isolated efforts of a number of public and private organizations that refuse to see ever younger victims suffer ever more intolerable violence, it is without doubt most alarming to observe that the market for sexual exploitation is continuing to grow.

Over the period covered by this report, violence against women has been brought to light, notably by the global #MeToo movement.

At the same time, the increased number of migrants escaping poverty or war has galvanized organized crime, leaving countries helpless and the public in disarray.

Make no mistake, without a clear awareness of the issues and a collective desire to address the new challenges that sexual exploitation puts in front of us, in front of our societies, these violence, injustices, and discrimination have a bright future. As we are faced with these new challenges, solutions can and must be provided here and now.

The Fondation Scelles was created with the goal of “knowing, understanding, and fighting” sexual exploitation. The knowledge that we have acquired since 1994 on the realities of prostitution allows us to definitively say that prostitution is a form of violence. Prostituted people display, after a few years, similar marks of trauma to survivors of concentration camps from WWII; it is not a coincidence that those who have managed to escape prostitution refer to themselves as “survivors.” We have observed, in every single country we have studied, the vulnerability of those entering prostitution—at an average age of 13 years old! Prostitution is extremely violent and procurers attack vulnerable people.

The words we use when we speak of prostitution can hide or reveal reality, and therefore language is of extreme importance and carries considerable consequences. Let us compare the language used in the neighboring countries of France and Germany:

– in France, terms used are procurer and human trafficker, liable to fines or imprisonment. In Germany, the procurer is a well-established entrepreneur.
– in Germany, one would speak of a “client.” In France, it would be fair to say “sex buyer”, as without them, there would be no more prostitution.
– in Germany, the “client” exchanges money for services. In France, the “sex buyer” actually pays for rape.

In Germany, just as in the Netherlands or in Australia (both countries that allow, but regulate prostitution), the words used are those of business: entrepreneur, client, and purchase of services, all of which serve to conceal the realities of prostitution. In France, an abolitionist country, terms used are or should be: procurer-trafficker, sex buyer, and “paid rape” to uncover the violence of prostitution. The realities of prostitution are the same across every country, but the vocabulary used qualifies
prostitution as either an unacceptable violence or a commercial service like any other. Differing mentalities have very concrete consequences; one only has to look at the numbers. In France, there are around 35,000 prostituted persons, but in Germany there are between 300,000 and 400,000!

Awareness by the French parliament and 60 French associations of those two realities, the violence of prostitution and the over-representation of our most vulnerable, incited towards a law change in 2016. The French law of April 13, 2016 is the only one of its kind in the world, and a sign of hope to every organization that fights against sexual exploitation. Thanks to this law, prostituted people are no longer offenders, but victims entitled to rehabilitation, while the sex buyer is now a criminal, punishable by fines and prison time.

“

There are certain principles on which one cannot compromise. The commodification of the human body is one of them. I am pleased that the recent revision of bioethics laws supported, on this topic, the position I held without ambiguity in 2009, during the previous round of revisions.

We can no longer tolerate the normalization of the exploitation of others, for commercial purposes as well as for dominating sexual purposes, as it risks letting might, richest or most violent make right.

This is not a situation lacking in examples, here and now.
How can we not see that our time, in a context of globalization without direction, can be plagued by major abuses, allowing, through indifference or ignorance, an unbearable crime, one that strikes the most defenseless: the Rohingyas in Myanmar, the Yazidis in Iraq and Afghanistan, the refugees from the Syrian War, the Nigerian and the Chinese people condemned to exile and sexual slavery, and the Roma community scattered throughout Europe.

More than 20 million people are thus sold each year, everywhere, and without mercy, actual invisible and silenced victims. Those victims are primarily women and children, on the grounds that everything is for sale, including the bodies of others, and especially so when they are defenseless.

In this regard, the Nobel Prize received by Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege in 2018 is, for every one of us, a sign of hope for all victims of human trafficking, as well as for all the activists who fight against it.

As for myself, a woman who has always been engaged in the fight against discrimination in all its forms, I am incapable of standing by and doing nothing while women are subjected to such extreme violence: the objectification of their bodies.

My country, since 2016, has chosen to no longer consider the sold woman as an offender but rather as a victim under the law of the Republic. It is now, rather, the sex buyer who is criminalized.

We must salute this progress and, above all, support it, so that the fight on violence against women is reality.

This new courageous and commendable policy faces formidable obstacles, sometimes from lack of political will, often from lack of means, and always from a lack of actual awareness by our fellow citizens.

Read and pass on the 5th Global report from Fondation Scelles; it will give you a better understanding of and lead you to think about the most current issues of a criminal phenomenon that is, above all, an injustice that can only be fought with the help of all.

“
Sandra Ayad is in charge of the Fondation Scelles’ International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation, where she coordinates research and analysis in some 60 countries and collects information on the subject to make it available to the grand public and to the decision-makers. In 25 years of work on the issues of sexual exploitation, she has developed extensive expertise, regularly intervenes at forums in France and abroad, and provides training to strategic audiences. Since its creation, she has been coordinating the design and implementation of the Fondation Scelles’ Global Report on sexual exploitation. Sandra Ayad has a Master of Science and Communication Techniques.

Catherine Goldmann is the deputy manager of the Fondation Scelles’ International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation. She has authored numerous studies on the subject and has been involved in the drafting of the Global Report on sexual exploitation since its first edition. Catherine Goldmann is project manager for the evaluation study on the implementation of the April 2016 law, led by the Fondation Scelles and co-financed by the Ministry of Solidarity and Health (DGCS). With a higher education in human sciences and a doctorate in medieval history, she has several years of experience as a researcher in institutional and associative environments (Senate, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Centre Jeanne d’Arc in Orléans, Association pour les fouilles archéologiques nationales).
Collaborated in researching information, writing and translating the Global Report:

A network of qualified partners

NGOs and experts contributed to the informational exchange instrumental in the writing of this book. They took time to answer our questionnaires; to give us contacts, statistics, or recent publications; to enrich our analyses with their commentary and experiences.

They provided a clear vision of the current situation of the sexual exploitation in their country, suitable for furthering the raising awareness on these issues and the reflection on the urgent answers needed.
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CONTACTS

COMMUNICATION

Laurence Dell’Aitante  Director of Communication  T 06 71 81 79 19  dellaitante@yahoo.fr
Frédéric Boisard  Communication & Presse  T 06 84 20 05 37  frederic.boisard@fondationscelles.org

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY

Sandra Ayad  Director of the International Observatory  T 01 40 26 91 47  sandra.ayad@fondationscelles.org
Catherine Goldmann  International Observatory  T 01 40 26 91 47  catherine.goldmann@fondationscelles.org