

# HOTLINE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

## Annual Report 2004



## Message from the Chairwoman of the Board - Myriam Darmoni-Sharvit

2004 has been an important year at the Hotline for Migrant Workers. On the issue of trafficking in women, we witnessed many pivotal changes, the major one being the opening of a shelter for prosecution witnesses. While our activism on behalf of migrant workers continues to grow, the deportation policy shows no signs of abating. This year, the Israeli public was exposed to the issue of lack of status of children of migrants. Although many of these children were born here, speak Hebrew and consider Israel their country, they are regarded as "illegal aliens" who are not entitled to civil rights. HMW together with other NGO's has made tremendous efforts to achieve recognition of their rights and to provide them with legal status. While the government drags its feet on the issue, the children and their families are becoming increasingly desperate. But we continue to hope that, consistent with Jewish values, Israel will eventually grant these children the rights and dignity they need and deserve. Although we often feel like we are climbing a slippery slope, our commitment to making a better Israel, and the support and encouragement we receive from clients, colleagues, friends, and donors, helps us to persevere.

In 2004 HMW underwent some significant staff changes. After many years of dedicated service as Executive Director, Sigal Rozen resigned, enabling her to realize her desire to work more directly with our clients and the media. We are grateful for her contribution and know that as Media Director she will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of migrant workers. Shevy Korzen, longtime volunteer, Board Member and most recently Director of Resource Development, replaced her as Executive Director in January 2004. In April 2004, Lisa Richlen was hired as the Associate Director for Resource Development, and Adv. Uri Sadeh, a dedicated volunteer, joined us as field coordinator of the trafficking program. We have also recruited Eli Shanny and Rom Levkowitz, two national service volunteers, who, together with Emi Saar and the volunteers at the Crisis Intervention Center, are doing tremendous work. New volunteers have also joined us from various academic institutions, scholarship, and community service programs. Last, but certainly not least, we extend our congratulations to Nomi Levenkron on the birth of a beautiful baby boy.

Organizationally, we continue to develop. Executive Director, Shevy Korzen was invited to attend an OSCE conference on trafficking in persons in Vienna, and Adv. Uri Sadeh participated in an international training-seminar in the Ukraine for organizations fighting human trafficking. Our volunteer training was enriched and expanded, by offering more workshops on relevant issues for volunteers.

We offer our deepest appreciation to outgoing board members Varda Yerushalmi and Yonatan Berman for their dedicated service and are looking forward to their continued involvement for many years. We also wish to extend warm greetings to new board members: Adv. Anat Ben Dor, Aviel Zilber, Adv. Oded Feller, Hanny Ben Israel and Rabbi Levi Lauer. They have demonstrated deep commitment to HMW goals and will use their outstanding skills to promote our activities and ideals. And, of course, a special thank you to continuing board members Ellen Kuchli, Dr. Galia Sabar, Lili Angel and Ella Keren for their long-term commitment to the rights of migrant workers and victims of trafficking in Israel.

In the following pages you will read about our activities during 2004, some background on the issues and the current state of affairs as it relates to migrant workers and victims of trafficking. I hope you find it informative and, as always, I welcome your participation and support.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Myriam Darmoni – Sharvit, Chairwoman  
Ms. Lili Angel  
Adv. Anat Ben Dor  
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Adv. Oded Feller  
Ms. Ella Keren  
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## STAFF

Shevy Korzen- Executive Director  
Sigal Rozen- Media Coordinator  
Adv. Nomi Levenkron- Head of Legal Department  
Emi Saar- Crisis Intervention Center Coordinator  
Adv. Uri Sadeh- Field Coordinator, Trafficking in Women  
Lisa Richlen- Associate Director for Resource Development

## VOLUNTEERS

In 2004 over 100 volunteers assisted the HMW:

- 15 volunteers operated the Crisis Intervention Center's telephone hotline
- 17 volunteers visited migrant workers in detention facilities
- 14 volunteers interviewed and assisted trafficking victims in detention facilities and in the government shelter
- 10 students and lawyers worked with the legal department
- 20 volunteers provided translations in Chinese, Thai, Spanish, Romanian, etc....
- Some 30 volunteers assisted in various activities such as editing, writing, giving lectures, graphic design and the International Migrant's Day event.

# Migrant Workers

## Background

In August 2002, with a deepening economic recession and an increase in unemployment, the government declared that, in order to solve the unemployment problem, migrant workers would be deported from Israel. Most migrants in Israel had come at the invitation of the Israeli government to work in construction, agriculture and care-giving. Over half had lost their legal status, many shortly after arrival, as a result of the policy of binding workers to their employers and poor enforcement of labor laws against those same employers.

Permit holding migrants suffered from a variety of abuses including not receiving minimum wage, substandard living conditions, passport confiscation and restrictions on their movement. Being bound to employers meant that workers had to choose between acquiescing to exploitation or losing their legal status. However, labor conditions on the free market were significantly better, and high debts in home countries paid out as fees for the privilege of working in Israel, convinced many to choose the latter. Others lost their legal status as a result of employer death, bankruptcy, illegal trading of workers, or employer failure to pay required taxes.

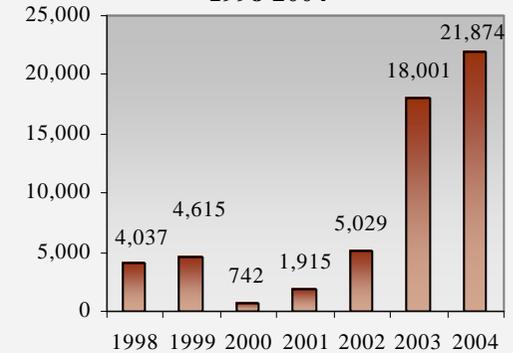
Overnight, these workers, many who had been employed in Israel for years, were targeted for immediate deportation. To accomplish this task, despite a serious economic recession, the government generously allocated 200 million shekels and 480 policemen to the newly formed “Immigration Administration”, which is in fact a deportation police. Four detention facilities were opened to house the migrants with 1,300 beds made available. The goal was to deport 100,000 migrants a year.

By the end of 2003, 100,000 migrants had either been deported or left of their own volition. At the same time, new workers continued to be brought in. The search for migrants lacking legal status continued unabated in 2004, with one significant difference - it was now much harder to find migrants eligible for deportation. Working to fill impossibly high quotas, migrants who would not have been touched in the past were targeted. Among deportees, we are seeing an increase in minors, asylum seekers, single parents, and migrants with valid work permits. Even Israeli citizens who look foreign risk arrest. Furthermore, the nature of the deportation process has become more brutal with increased complaints of police violence. Recent media reports have drawn attention to these issues.



**A worker from China being arrested by the Deportation Police**

**No. of Migrant Workers Deported from Israel 1998-2004**



Research conducted by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment, published in 2004, found that the primary reason workers lose their legal status is abuse at the hands of employers. Violations committed by employers, combined with the policy of binding workers to their employer in order to maintain legal status, result in legal workers leaving their employers. The findings counter the common notion that “illegal” migrants lost their legal status as a result of overstaying their visas.

The deportation policy costs about 200 million NIS a year, less than 1% of which is devoted to enforcement against employers.

# Migrant Workers

## *Crisis Intervention*

The dramatic increase in deportees has been reflected in the number of inquiries our Crisis Intervention Center receives. In order to address this increase, in 2004, we doubled the telephone hotline hours. It currently operates from Sunday to Thursday between 10:00-18:00 and Friday from 9:00-13:00 with volunteers answering about 500 calls a month. They provided information and assistance on topics such as release on bail, rights during arrest and deportation, refugee status, false arrests and police violence.

HMW volunteers made 150 visits to four detention facilities around the country, meeting with over 2,000 detainees. They offered information, legal advice and humanitarian aid, such as providing the detainees with phone cards, books, and clothing. Volunteers monitored prison conditions and analyzed rulings on deportations handed down by the deportee's court in prison. The information was used to monitor government statistics, in HMW publications, for press releases and as the basis for legal action.

In the last year, the types of cases handled by the Crisis Intervention Center have changed. Whereas at the beginning of the deportation policy we had many African and South American clients, these communities have largely been deported along with leadership of all of the migrant communities. In their place, is an increase in the number Philippine nationals seeking our assistance (mostly caregivers in the process of arranging new employment), spouses of Israelis who have not been able to obtain legal status, Chinese and Thai workers wrongfully arrested, asylum seekers, and minors. These groups often have the right to stay in Israel, yet need assistance in fulfilling this right. Consequently the workload of the Crisis Intervention Center has increased.

Over 5,000 calls were made to the telephone hotline in 2004. In addition to providing information to all callers, the Crisis Intervention Center represented 586 workers in dealings with various governmental authorities, providing legal advocacy and representation on their behalf. In doing so, volunteers sent over 2,000 letters to various offices, including:

- 936 letters to the Deportee's Court requesting release on bail. We were successful in 50% of the cases.
- 506 letters to the Ministry of the Interior requesting revocation of deportation orders against legal workers wrongfully detained, release of detainees on humanitarian grounds, and application of the right to bail.
- 258 letters to the Deportation Police concerning detention for unlawfully extended periods of time, detention of minors, provision of plane tickets, etc....
- 71 letters to the Department of Police Investigation regarding police violence, disappearance of detainees' personal belongings, and failure to allow detainees to collect their personal belongings.
- 27 letters to the prison authorities regarding conditions of detention, medical care in prison, etc....

## **Steven and Mary Adee**

Steven and Mary Adee, migrants from Ghana, had been living in Israel for 5 years. Steven was incarcerated at the end of December 2003 and slated for deportation. His wife Mary, in her 6th month of pregnancy at the time, assumed that Steven would be deported immediately and during the initial incarceration made plans to leave the country.

However, Steven's deportation was delayed due to illness. Mary waited to hear about his condition and by the time he was diagnosed, she was too pregnant to fly. With Steven in jail, she was soon out of money. Mary turned to us and other NGO's for assistance. She was provided with emergency housing and free medical care while we assisted her by collecting food, clothing, and other items for the baby.

At the beginning of April, with Steven still in prison, she gave birth to a baby girl. An initial visit to prison to see Steven and show him the baby was unsuccessful but, due to our intervention, she was allowed to visit him a week later.

After spending five months in prison, and being proclaimed well enough to be deported, Steven was scheduled for deportation. Despite only a few hours of warning, we picked up Mary and drove her and the baby to the airport to see him off.

# Migrant Workers

## ***Legal Action***

***Judicial Review of Deportation:*** In previous years, in conjunction with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), we have managed to achieve the right of judicial review, grounded in law, for migrant workers facing deportation. This is an improvement on the previous situation, where migrants could languish in prison for months or even years without anyone reviewing their case. However, many aspects of this law discriminate against non-Israelis while others have not been implemented. For example, Israeli detainees must be brought before a judge within 24 hours of arrest, while migrants may be held in detention for 14 days without judicial review. The law, already lacking, was poorly implemented as hearings, most lasting no more than a few minutes, were conducted without translation, and did not include any legal representation or information about rights. In a High Court petition filed by ACRI and HMW in 2002, we sought to improve this situation. In early 2004, Manny Mazuz was appointed Attorney General. He committed to improving judicial review of deportees by shortening the time that a deportee must be brought before the Deportee's Court from 14 to 4 days, limiting the number of hearings held by each judge to 30 cases a day, appointing more court judges, ensuring translation in hearings and providing administrative assistants to the court. Some of these promises were implemented, but we are still waiting for many of these changes to take place on the ground and will continue to press for full implementation.

***Deportation of Minors:*** According to the Law of Entry to Israel, foreign minors may be deported. Yet international and other Israeli laws require that the state ensure the safety and well-being of all minors. This is surely not the case when minors are arrested, detained and deported without anyone reliable available to take guardianship of them in the country of origin. Most of the minors arrested in Israel have lost contact with their families and are living with friends of the family or other members of the community in Israel. Deporting them means sending them to a fate unknown. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of minors are being arrested, detained and deported without proper protection. In 2004 we filed 4 petitions against deportation of minors, compelling the authorities to release them, and requesting that an institutionalized solution be found, whereby the welfare authorities review their case, contact welfare authorities in countries of origin, inasmuch as they exist, and recommend action that insures their protection. The last case was filed with ACRI and is still being heard.

***The Binding Policy:*** The binding policy severely restricts the ability of migrant workers to change employers. A worker who is not employed by the person written on his work permit is considered 'illegal' and risks immediate deportation. Work termination irrespective of circumstances - abusive work conditions, worker's illness, employer bankruptcy or even death - renders a worker illegal. In 2002 the Human Rights Clinic at the Tel Aviv University Law school petitioned on behalf of the HMW, Kav La'Oved, ACRI and other NGO's against this policy. After presenting various 'explanations' for this policy, which ultimately failed to satisfy the court, the government began to develop an alternate system for employing migrant workers, intended to do away with the binding of workers. Only recently published, the new proposal involves putting more power in the hands of employment agencies, notorious for taking advantage of workers. We are concerned that this will not sufficiently protect the rights of workers. A position paper outlining our concerns with the new system was distributed to government ministers and members of Knesset.

## **Summary of Legal Activity**

With help of volunteer lawyers, law students, and in collaboration with other NGOs, the legal department handled 29 petitions and suits regarding migrant workers:

- 6 petitions to the High Court of Justice regarding fundamental issues pertaining to migrants, with special emphasis on the deportation process.
- 14 petitions to the District Court representing individuals in precedent setting cases such as deportation of migrants with Israeli partners, detention and deportation of minors, unlawful detention, etc....
- 8 tort suits were brought against the government for unlawful detention and injuries caused by police violence.
- 1 labor suit was filed against an abusive employer.

# Migrant Workers

## *Public Policy*

**Children of Migrants:** A combination of legal action, media publicity, and changes in government has had a tremendous impact on the issue of children of migrants. In March 2003 ACRI and Physicians for Human Rights petitioned the high court on behalf of four children who were born in Israel and reached the age of 18 without any legal status. Three out of the four have parents from different countries. At the HMW, we used this appeal as an opportunity to draw media attention and public support to the cause of providing these children with legal status.

As of yet, there has been no ruling in the case, just a series of postponements. However, the Interior Minister decided to grant temporary status to a limited number of children of migrants in Israel. The decision was controversial and the legal advisor to the government issued an opinion that the Minister does not have the authority to make this decision on his own. Consequently, in February of 2004, an inter-ministerial committee was established and charged with collecting data about the scope and content of the issue.

According to media leaks, children who are currently between the ages of 10-18 and have spent the majority of their lives in Israel will be eligible, on a one-time basis, for citizenship. This would impact about 600 children. The parents and younger brothers and sisters would be entitled to receive temporary residency until that same child turns 21. An order was given stating that until the committee comes to a decision, parents who have children fitting these criteria should not be arrested. During 2004, NGO's frequently assisted in the release parents of children falling into this category. In January 2005, a new Minister was appointed whose position also involves promoting a policy of awarding limited citizenship to children of migrant workers.

All of the movement on this issue was a result of cooperation by the three NGO's who combined their power and expertise in the form of legal action, individual intervention, and media activism. Their pressure influenced committee deliberations and brought the issue to the forefront of Israeli consciousness.

**Lectures:** We conducted 54 lectures and tours for migrants, academics, lawyers, jurists, students, teachers, civil servants, international groups and attorneys.

**Media Items:** In 2004, over 80 articles were published on the issue of migrants. HMW staff appeared on TV 10 times and on the radio 12 times.

**International Migrants Day:** On December 18th, in conjunction with the Tel Aviv Cinematheque, the community of migrant workers, and human rights organizations, a film and culture festival was held commemorating "International Migrant's Day." The purpose of this annual event is to promote recognition of migrant workers, heighten awareness of violations of their human rights and direct attention to their contribution to the economy and the local culture.

## **Galit's Story**

Galit, now ten years old, was born in Israel to two parents from Ghana. She considers herself Israeli in every way - her friends at school are Israeli, she was given an Israeli name, and she is an excellent student in the Israeli public school she attends. She even has the appropriate level of Israeli "chutzpah."

Her father was first arrested two years ago and released after we presented a letter from the school social worker explaining the damage deportation in the middle of the school year would inflict on Galit. In January 2004, he was arrested for a second time and we were able to release him on a technicality.

During his incarceration, we convinced a reporter from the Israeli daily Maariv to publish an in-depth story on Galit in the weekend edition of the newspaper. The article generated hundreds of letters from angry and ashamed Israeli citizens - some of whom Holocaust survivors - who were appalled at the way foreigners are treated. The HMW collected the letters and sent them to the Ministry of the Interior together with an official request for legal status for Galit and her family. The Ministry of Interior had still not answered our request at the date of Galit's father's deportation. With the help of a volunteer lawyer, we filed a petition on their behalf requesting that he not be deported until the government makes a decision regarding children of migrants. The court granted the request, and Galit and her parents are still waiting for the government decision.

In the meantime, the inter-ministerial committee on the status of children of minors was established. The district court ruled the family could stay until the committee submitted its recommendation.

# Trafficking in Women

## **Background**

Estimates vary widely with 500-3000 women believed to be trafficked into Israel every year to work in the sex industry, as part of what has become a worldwide trade. They are victims of violence, threats and rape by traffickers, smugglers, pimps and clients. The women are forced to receive up to thirty clients a day, seven days a week, thirty days a month. The majority are from Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia. In the past year we have seen an increase in minors and victims from Uzbekistan.

For those of us working to fight trafficking in women in Israel, 2004 has been a rewarding year as many significant changes have taken place:

**Enforcement:** We are seeing more stringent enforcement against pimps and traffickers. There has been a significant increase in the number of files opened and arrests conducted, as well as indictments issued and convictions made. In 2003 a law was passed mandating that punishments must be at least 1/4 of the 16 year maximum allowed by law in standard cases. This was in response to a situation where punishments were characterized by two years or less in prison and many plea bargains. Currently, punishments start at four years and reach 12 years.

**Rights for Prosecution Witnesses:** Conditions for, and rights afforded to women choosing to be prosecution witnesses have improved significantly. In February 2004, a shelter was opened, holding a maximum of 50 women waiting to give testimony. Also in February, following a law granting gradual state-provision of legal representation to all trafficking victims, the Minister of Justice signed an order applying the law immediately to prosecution witnesses. In accordance with the law, by August 2006, state-sponsored legal representation is expected to be provided for all trafficking victims. Although initially not the case, currently prosecution witnesses are being issued temporary residency and work visas (valid until they give testimony and for a short period afterwards), and state provision of healthcare. As well, some residents at the shelter have been provided with jobs.

Unfortunately, many of these same rights - healthcare, visas, state-sponsored legal representation, and the option of staying in a shelter as opposed to a detention center, are not afforded to all victims of trafficking, only to prosecution witnesses. Securing those rights will be the focus of HMW activities for 2005-2006.

## **Trafficking in Persons Worldwide:**

- According to the UN, between 2 and 4 million people are trafficked worldwide every year.
- Human trafficking is so common now that it is the third most profitable criminal activity in the world after illegal drugs and arms trafficking. It is estimated that trafficking in persons generates between 7-13 billion dollars a year.
- According to the US State Department, 80% of victims trafficked across international borders are female and 70% of those are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- As many as 500,000 people are trafficked in Europe every year; the majority being women and girls forced into prostitution.

## **How do people become victims of trafficking?**

- Trafficking is an outgrowth of globalization and gaps between rich and poor countries. As long as these gaps exist, people from poor countries will try to enter rich countries.
- Men, women and children from developing countries are lured to wealthier countries with promises of high pay and good opportunity. Desperate to escape dire financial situations, the weak are particularly at risk.
- Traffickers promise good jobs or study and then force the victims to be modern day slaves - often working in the sex industry or in heavy labor. The criminals profit while the victims suffer from physical and sexual violence, withheld passports, sub-standard living conditions, and other violations of their human rights.

## Trafficking in Women

### *Crisis Intervention*

Volunteers made 53 visits to the 4 detention facilities where trafficking victims are detained, providing assistance to over 100 women. We referred 18 women wishing to give testimony against their traffickers to the police and subsequently most were moved to the shelter for prosecution witnesses. A safe and coordinated return home, with the assistance of International Organization of Migration partner agencies in countries of origin, was provided for 12 women. In this and other areas, we continue to cooperate closely with the legal clinic for trafficking in women at the Hebrew University.

*25 year old D was trafficked into Israel from Russia in 2002. We found her in prison in 2003 awaiting deportation and encouraged her to give testimony. Following this decision, the police put her in a hotel with other prosecution witnesses. While she was waiting to give testimony, her traffickers found her and threatened her - prompting a move to a different hotel. Not only did this not deter her from giving testimony, but she filed a complaint with the police. During this waiting period, she was very busy both learning new skills and furthering the fight against trafficking. D volunteered for us as a translator, provided information for someone writing a book on trafficking, and was interviewed for a documentary film. We also convinced people to donate both a painting course and a computer course for her. Following testimony, we were successful in obtaining a work permit for her for a year. Unfortunately, after 4 months of frustration dealing with Israeli bureaucracy, she decided to return to Russia. Before she left, she gave valuable feedback to the police about her experience as a victim and to the Ministry of Justice about the difficulties she encountered despite receiving a work permit. D is lucky. She was one of the few victims who received assistance and in turn, was able to contribute. She is fortunate to have a supportive family which will help her in her recovery. D entered University in January and remains in contact with us.*

Although the opening of a shelter for prosecution witnesses is a huge improvement over the previous situation, many of the kinks are still being worked out. In 2004 HMW volunteers made 23 visits to the shelter monitoring conditions there and assisting the women to advocate for improved conditions. While initially the women staying there were prevented from leaving, except for very limited amounts of time, they currently have achieved greater freedom of movement. Women at shelter were also not being provided with work visas, in contradiction to the decision of the Minister of Interior, but due to pressure by the HMW and the Knesset Committee on Trafficking, many currently receive work visas and jobs. However, difficulties in finding employers willing to hire them and getting the police to approve the workplace as both safe and appropriate, is impeding this process for others.

The state has also responded favorably to the idea of issuing visas for prosecution witnesses not residing in the shelter. Seven women in this category were granted temporary residency permits following requests by the HMW and the Hebrew University Clinic for Trafficking. These visas allowed them to stay in Israel to earn some money and rebuild their lives.

### **Who are the victims in Israel?**

- The average age of trafficking victims is 23, 25% have one or more children, and only 9% have worked in prostitution in the past.
- Most know they will be working in prostitution but they are lured here under false pretenses. They are told they will only have to accept 2-3 clients a day, they can refuse clients, and they will be free to leave. Women coming from Uzbekistan are usually told that they will have cleaning or care-giving jobs.
- Trafficking victims are lured to Israel with promises that they will earn \$1000 a month. The GNI per capita in their countries of origin is about \$500 a year.
- Victims are forced to work every day of the month, and rarely do they see any of the profits. Some are locked in their brothels and traffickers often threaten to harm their families.



A drawing by a trafficking victim depicting her experience.

# Trafficking in Women

## **Legal Action**

**Legal Redress:** As part of the criminal proceedings against traffickers, government prosecutors are permitted to request compensation for the victims. However, this is usually not done, and even in cases where compensation is requested, the court has granted very low sums. We represented 4 women in applying for compensation in criminal proceedings. As a result, they were awarded between 7,500-40,000 NIS. These sums are still very low and we will continue to represent women to demanding fair legal redress. Our representation and intensive work with government prosecutors educates the system to be more sensitive to the needs of the women.

**Giving Testimony:** Unfortunately, the majority of trafficking victims are still being deported without being given the option of testifying. This is because the Deportation Police, in order to fill impossibly high quotas, has an interest in deporting as many women as possible. Those learning of the option to give testimony are either identified by NGO's or targeted by the police because the police need the woman's testimony against a specific person. Even when our volunteers find willing women, we sometimes have to convince the state to take their case. Further reducing the likelihood of testimony from the woman's perspective is the fact that the risk is great and the rewards are negligible. We will persist in our efforts to improve conditions for women agreeing to give testimony, and to pressure the police to accept their testimony.

**Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice:** Women who agree to serve as prosecution witnesses have the option of receiving government-provided legal representation. Following their criminal cases, they can pursue civil cases requesting legal redress. Since the passing of the law enabling victims of trafficking to receive state-provided legal representation, we have offered our assistance to the Ministry of Justice. Our assistance and the Ministry's own efforts have resulted in significant improvements in their handling of cases in the last year. The process has become more centralized and institutionalized, involved staff are more educated on the issues and more skilled, and consequently the quality of representation is improving. The Ministry of Justice requests our consultation, particularly as it relates to work and stay visas for prosecution witnesses and in civil cases against traffickers.

## **A Volunteers Story**

S, a Russian immigrant, was one of our first volunteers to work in the trafficking program and remains one of our most loyal. Recruited by Sigal for her language skills, she initially agreed to visit prison because it was conveniently located near her army base and because her language skills made her services particularly valuable. In prison, she met with many women who, due to the language barrier, had been incarcerated for months with no visitors or help from the authorities. Therefore, much of her time was spent translating. Her initial motivation to volunteer was not political or ideological, rather, it came out of the realization that people needed help and she could provide it.

Gradually, through her involvement with the HMW, a political and social consciousness began to develop. As a Jew who suffered from discrimination in her home country, she felt "insulted that my country, which claims to speak in my name, does the same thing to other people - maybe worse." Her main motivation now comes primarily from the awareness that she is a part of the social fabric of the country and therefore responsible for it. More important to S than the individuals she assists, is the feeling that her involvement with the HMW helps to deal with social problems at their roots.

She said "The Hotline's work demands a lot of effort but I have come to see how citizens can create change if they are stubborn enough. It gives me a feeling of power that I, as an individual, can do something small which will impact reality." She feels that although the changes that the Hotline makes sometimes seem very insignificant, her involvement gives her the sense that the average citizen has influence.

Many people in this society feel that you can't change anything- S's experience with the Hotline has proven otherwise.

# Trafficking in Women

## *Public Policy*

**Client Demand:** When one thinks of trafficking in women for the sex industry, our thoughts naturally turn to the victims or the offenders - the traffickers and the pimps or the women. We often forget the role clients play in driving the thriving trade in women. As the authorities have become more involved with prosecution, NGO's are starting to tackle this somewhat sensitive issue.

We have been at the forefront of examining this issue and are approaching it in a number of ways. We initiated a Parliamentary Committee session focusing on the issue of client demand. At this session, we presented a short position paper with recommendations for how to tackle the demand side of trafficking. It generated significant publicity and helped to propel the issue into public consciousness.

We have prepared a report on client demand with the Clinic for Trafficking in Women at the Hebrew University School of Law. Among other topics, the report examines the nature of the clients and their motivations, legalization and governmental policies around the world, and presents approaches for dealing with the client.

We participate in a coalition of 22 organizations dedicated to fighting trafficking in women in Israel. With the help of Lili Angel, a board member with ties in the business and media world, the coalition launched a media campaign targeting the client. It consisted of free advertisements on two commercial T.V. stations, announcements on local radio stations, advertisements in the three national newspapers, and internet features. The campaign focused on alerting the public to suffering of the women and reminding them of their role in enabling the trafficking cycle. We are further strengthening the message by making client demand a main topic of the lectures we give to Israeli groups.

**Legislation:** Current legislation related to trafficking consists of a number of additions to the Penal Code, however, there has never been a comprehensive anti-trafficking in persons law. To this end, we have been instrumental in drafting such a law together with the Knesset Inquiry Committee on Trafficking in Women; it is currently in the first stages of legislation in the Knesset. This law includes many elements we hope to see in a comprehensive anti-trafficking law, including a broader definition of trafficking and related infractions, better tools for punishing offenders, and increased rights afforded to all trafficking victims such as healthcare, work and stay visas, provision of legal redress, and mental health treatment. Two additional laws have been drafted, the first aims to criminalize policemen visiting brothels as clients, and the second would enable the shutting down of brothels in which trafficking victims are held.

**Protection of Victims:** Unfortunately, government favors the law and order approach; which only shows interest in the women when it serves the need to fight organized crime. Once that need is satisfied, the goal is to deport the women as soon as possible. Enormous client demand on the part of the Israeli public also indicates widespread acceptance of current attitudes towards the women. Our advocacy target the widest possible audience as a strategy for change these attitudes and behaviors. In the past year our activities were directed towards various authorities: the media, judges, city council members, academics, members of the Israeli Parliament, policy-makers, the clients, and the public at large.

**Lectures:** 40 lectures and tours were arranged for academics, lawyers, jurists, students, teachers, civil servants, and attorneys.

**Media Items:** In 2004, over 18 articles were published on the issue of trafficking with special emphasis on the 'demand' side of the issue. HMW staff appeared on TV and radio 7 times.

**The Knesset:** HMW staff attended all meetings of the Inquiry Committee on Trafficking in Women and initiated a special committee session on the issue of client demand. We presented a short position paper which suggests several ways of combating demand including prosecution, legislation and education.

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** Together with Isha L'Isha-Haifa Feminist Center and the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, we prepared prevention brochures. These are disseminated by the Foreign Ministry in source countries.

**Prevention in Source Countries:** Our comprehensive report on trafficking in women was published in Russian and sent to NGOs in source countries to assist them in their prevention efforts.

**Media Campaign:** Together with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women we launched a media campaign (press, radio and television) aimed at the clients, and held a one day seminar on the issue.

## Challenges for 2005-2006

**Crisis Intervention** - We will continue to advise migrants about their rights while offering assistance in their realization. Special emphasis will be placed on the Chinese and Thai community. Our goals are:

- To increase access to the judicial system for migrant workers facing deportation
- To educate migrant workers and victims of trafficking on their rights
- To increase protection of victims of exploitation and trafficking

**Legal Action and Public Policy** - Special emphasis will be placed on infractions against migrants during the deportation process (including police violence) and on client demand for sex from trafficking victims. In this area our goals are:

- To ensure due process in legal proceedings for deportees and adherence to the law by government agencies
- To increase enforcement against exploitative employers, traffickers, and pimps
- To educate professionals, decision makers, and the public on human rights violations
- To promote public policy protecting the rights of foreign nationals and fighting exploitation and trafficking

**Combating Trafficking in Women** - Our activism will focus on stiffer penalties for offenders and better compensation for victims. Our goals are:

- To meet standards set by the UN convention on trafficking regarding prosecution, protection and prevention
- To insure the victims receive appropriate legal redress

**Assisting Trafficking Victims to Escape the Sex Industry** - Our newest initiative, in cooperation with the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel and Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center, will provide safe, emergency housing for women wishing to leave the trafficking cycle. Through the opening of a shelter, we will meet the basic needs of at least 50 women on a short-term basis. Simultaneously, public policy and legal work will establish the social and legal rights of all trafficking victims, not only prosecution witnesses.

### Did you know?

13% of all deportees in 2004 were Chinese and 4% were Thais. This number has increased in the past months as the Deportation Police has started to focus on these two groups.

Only 2% of migrants who represent themselves in prison tribunals are released, whereas 50% of those represented by HMW are released.

We estimate over 1,000,000 visits a month are made to brothels a month.

Despite the government's "closed skies" policy for the bringing in of migrant workers, thousands of workers continue to be brought into Israel, while simultaneously others are being deported. In 2003 over 30,000 migrants were brought into the country.

The vast majority of trafficking victims, including prosecution witnesses, never receive any legal redress (monetarily or otherwise) for their suffering.

Despite the deportation policy, unemployment has remained stable at 10-11%.

NGO's continue to receive requests for assistance from women wanting to leave the sex industry. As of yet, no institutional solution exists for these women.

## The Hotline for Migrant Workers

**The Hotline for Migrant Workers (HMW)**, established in 1998, is a non-partisan, non-profit organization, dedicated to (a) promoting the civil and human rights of migrant workers and (b) eliminating trafficking in women in Israel. We aim to build a more just, equitable and democratic society in Israel where respect for the other and protection of the weak are paramount civic and political values.

We see as vital eliminating exploitation of women and violence against them, the proper treatment of non-Jews amongst us and supporting the broad enforcement of laws, policies and procedures that promote equality and justice, as part of the humanistic and universal values that Judaism teaches and on which Israel was founded.

The HMW was founded by a group of citizens disturbed by the exploitation and abuse of migrant workers in Israel. With initial support from the NGO Kav La'Oved, the HMW was able to fill a critical deficiency in existing services by assisting foreigners under arrest and slated for deportation. Volunteers provided humanitarian aid through visits to migrants in detention centers, a telephone hotline, legal advice and psychological support. Our trips to detention centers brought us face to face with victims of sex trafficking, and this has become a major issue that the HMW addresses. We continue to complement and cooperate with other like-minded organizations, and in 2001 The Association for Civil Rights in Israel awarded us the Emil Gruenzweig Award for promoting the rights of migrant workers and victims of trafficking.

We assist residents of Israel lacking legal status through:

- Crisis intervention: Providing information and solutions to those detained and exploited;
- Legal action: Filing suits and petitions promoting public accountability and enforcement of the rule of law;
- Public policy: Educating and informing through work with the Israeli public, academia, the media and policymakers.



**Hotline board members, staff and volunteers at our most recent event commemorating International Migrants Day**

### Major HMW Accomplishments

Our telephone hotline has served over 12,000 clients and our volunteers have provided basic emotional support and protection to 10,000 deportees through visits to detention centers.

In a precedent-setting case, the HMW represented a trafficking victim in a civil suit against her traffickers requesting damages.

We achieved judicial review for detained migrants slated for deportation and state-financed legal aid for victims of trafficking.

In 2003, as a result of a joint petition filed by HMW and Physicians for Human Rights, public policy was changed to provide mandatory healthcare by the state for prosecution witnesses.

We are responsible for media publication of more than 500 articles and have given over 150 lectures and seminars to the Israeli public.

HMW is a recognized authority providing advice and consultation to national and international governmental bodies and NGO's, academia, and civic groups.

***To Contribute to Our Work:***

Please send checks to: The Hotline for Migrant Workers, 33 Ha'hashmal Street, Tel-Aviv 65117, Israel, or contact Lisa Richlen at: [lisa@hotline.org.il](mailto:lisa@hotline.org.il).

U.S. tax deductible contributions of at least \$50 may be made via the New Israel Fund. Contributions should be marked as donor-advised to The Hotline for Migrant Workers and sent to The New Israel Fund, PO Box 91588, Washington DC 20090-1588. U.S. tax deductible contributions of at least \$25 may also be sent (and must be made payable) to P.E.F. Israel Endowment Funds, Inc., 317 Madison Avenue, Suite 607, New York, NY 10017 with a recommendation that it be used for The Hotline for Migrant Workers.

The Hotline for Migrant Workers  
33 Ha'hashmal Street  
Tel Aviv, 65117, Israel  
Tel. 972.3.5602530 Fax. 972.3.5605175  
<http://www.hotline.org.il>  
[info@hotline.org.il](mailto:info@hotline.org.il)

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