



A collection of some news articles
during 2000/1/2/3

The reality and relevance of Child Prostitution Hillbrow area of Johannesburg, South Africa

1. Half of Jo'burg street hookers are kids - By Claudia Mpeta
2. Parents hunt for daughter at Hillbrow hotel - By Staff Reporter
3. 'Child sex trade flourishing in SA' - By Bheko Madlala
4. Police admit link to child brothels - By Rapule Tabana
5. Senior cop appointed to probe sleaze dens - By Lynne Altenroxel
6. Europa reporter receives death threat
7. There is a way to close Hillbrow brothel
8. Hillbrow sleaze: police put on the spot
9. Jo'burg battles to close 'dens of iniquity' - By Melanie-Ann Feris
10. Cops, council ignoring child prostitute hotel - By Lynne Altenroxel
11. Child-sex trade on rise in SA - rights group - By Steven Swindells
12. 'Child raped every 30 minutes in SA'
13. Pimp parents jailed, sex offenders walk free
14. Sentence delay for parents who pimped kids
15. Mother caught pimping underage daughters
16. Sex-slave trade in kids 'thriving' – expert
17. Mother City 'hosts regular child sex tours' – By SAPA
18. Vulnerable youth 'used' by night-clubs - By Krisendra Bisetty & Jani Meyer

Published on the Web by IOL

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Half of Jo'burg street hookers are kids

By Claudia Mpeta

At least 4 000 children are among the 10 000 prostitutes jostling for clients in Johannesburg's streets.

Child prostitution is on the increase nationwide, and the demand for child prostitutes, especially black children, is on the increase.

Contrary to widespread belief, not all the kids on the street are from poverty-stricken homes or are streetchildren - even some apparently well-off kids from the northern suburbs sell their bodies after school to raise money to feed their voracious drug habits.

And the situation is getting worse, according to representatives of several organisations dealing with the sexual exploitation of children.

They say urgent intervention by the government is needed to help prevent girls from turning to prostitution.

The House Group, an organisation working in Hillbrow, estimates that 40 percent of sex workers in Johannesburg are under 18. The average age of a child prostitute is about 14, with some as young as seven being forced to the streets by their parents, or sold to pimps or gangs.

The Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (Sweat) in Cape Town says that at least 1 000 of the city's 4 000 sex workers are children.

"Because of the hidden nature of sex work, statistics aren't available," says Molo Songolo, who works for an organisation that is currently researching the trafficking of women and children for sex.

"But what has emerged is that there is an increasing demand for children, especially black children, for sex. This appears to be linked to the increase in tourism to South Africa.

"International research has shown that southern countries are a prime destination for sex tourists," she says.

Songolo adds that children in South Africa are perceived to be sexually active at an early age and an easy target for tourists.

The United States recently called for urgent global action to combat the multibillion-rand "slave trade" in women and children for sex. Global estimates put the annual turnover derived from human trafficking at well over R12-billion.

"The increase in poverty has resulted in an increase in the number of children exposed to physical and sexual abuse," says Sweat's Glynis Rhodes.

"Children run to the streets to escape abuse and are often forced into prostitution to survive. There is also an increase in hidden prostitution.

"These children have regulars who pick them up for sex in exchange for something as basic as a burger."

Several organisations blame the government for not doing much to address the problem. And there are very few places for young girls to turn to.

"Places of safety don't want children who are sexually active," says Adele du Plessis, founder of The House Group.

Parents hunt for daughter at Hillbrow hotel

By Staff Reporter

The mother, father and aunt of a missing 19-year-old girl, as well as four police officers and a photographer and reporter from The Star newspaper, searched the sleazy Europa hotel in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, for her on Monday.

Harry and Lizzie Moon, of Naturena in southern Johannesburg, approached The Star on Monday after seeing a front-page photograph in the newspaper last week of two girls in a room at the Europa.

They were convinced that one of them in the photograph was Leonora, their daughter who has been missing since November.

"It is not something (prostitution) she would get involved in, she was a regular churchgoer," said Lizzie Moon of her daughter as a number of condom packets on the floor caught her eye.

'Prostitution is not something she would get involved in'
The Moons were taken through the hotel by Terrance John, who claimed to be the hotel's stock controller.

He agreed to let police search the hotel, but insisted that the girl whom the Moons believed to be their daughter was, in fact, someone named Julia.

The first room they searched had opened condom packets strewn outside the locked door. After banging on the door several times, it was opened by a young woman dressed in a red silk shorts set.

As soon as she opened the door, she ran back to her bed and covered herself with blankets. A man lay under a blanket on a single bed on the other side of the small room, refusing to let himself be seen.

A sign, cut from styrofoam and hanging on the wall, read: "Thank you for being a great mother".

'We can't just leave here without her'
The Moons, the police and The Star team were not allowed into all the rooms - causing the Moons to accuse John of hiding their daughter. "She has already been moved," said an increasingly irritated Lizzie Moon as she passed by the ladies bar, which was crowded at midday.

The couple were satisfied only when the young woman they had seen in the picture returned to the hotel - she had been at the hairdressers when we arrived - and showed them the dress she was wearing on the day the picture was taken.

Before this, however, they were taken to several rooms, where John and his assistants banged on doors until the occupants opened up.

The Star's photographer was threatened by a staffer for taking a photograph of him.

"Why are you taking pictures of me? Did I ask you to take a picture of me? You are here for something else ... just be careful, I will kill you," said the unidentified man.

But then, Julia had arrived and the Moons followed her to her fifth-floor room and found the dress she had been wearing when she was photographed.

A disheartened Harry Moon could not bring himself to leave the hotel without finding his daughter. "We can't just leave here without her," he said as his wife waited in the police vehicle for him. "It is back to looking for her all over again."

Still, after seeing the lives the young girls led, the couple were slightly relieved that their daughter had not taken to a life of prostitution.

The Europa hotel was raided by police last week after The Star reported that local police ignored the many crimes allegedly being committed there.

In December, 11 child prostitutes were taken from the hotel to The House, a place of safety, after a raid. - Staff Reporter

The Star Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-02-05 20:55:06

'Child sex trade flourishing in SA'

By Bheko Madlala

South Africa has become a transit country for girls as young as 10 from other African countries who are being sold as sex slaves to international syndicates, research has revealed.

The non-governmental organisation Molo Songololo, which presented research to members of the provincial parliament in the Pietermaritzburg legislature on Monday, said the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation involved both in-country and cross-border trafficking, with South Africa having been turned into a transit point for girls who were being transported from African countries en route to Europe.

While the survey also notes that the cross-border trafficking involving South Africa is not new and dates back to the late 19th century, it reveals that the global trafficking industry is one of the fastest-growing and most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world.

It also found that trafficking in children for sexual exploitation was the third largest source of profits for organised crime after drugs and guns.

The trafficking industry is one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises

"Children from rural areas are offered a job and the offer is made to a parent.

"The child is transported to South Africa and when she arrives the language factor and fact that she does not have money will force her to sell her body."

The research indicated that the traffickers were Angolan and Bulgarian ex-military personnel, individual agents, Chinese Triads, Congolese, Nigerian and Russian mafia.

The countries of origin were Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia and the children were being transported via air and sea routes.

They are then placed into any of the legal or illegal sectors of the sex industry such as on the street, escort agencies, brothels, hotel brothels, massage parlours, clubs, on trucking routes, in harbours and in the private homes of traffickers.

"The children who fall victim to this scourge are children who come from rural areas, who leave home because of poverty, have been sexually abused, run away from places of safety, have limited schooling and employment skills or live in homes where sexual exploitation is regarded as normal," the survey stated.

This article was originally published on page 1 of [The Daily News](#) on 04 March 2003

Police admit link to child brothels

By Rapule Tabane

Gauteng police commissioner Sharma Maharaj admitted on Tuesday that some police officers are involved in Hillbrow's seedy establishments.

His admission follows recent reports questioning the apparent lack of action against hotels and clubs in the area operating as brothels, some involving children, and which revealed allegations of police involvement in at least six such establishments.

Addressing the Gauteng legislature's standing committee on public safety and liaison, Maharaj said three police officers were being investigated for accepting bribes or owning some of the hotels in Hillbrow.

'Some truth to the allegations'

"There is some truth to the allegations made about police involvement," he said.

Last month, extracts of a letter sent by the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council to the police were published, revealing council concern about "the clear involvement" of police officers in some of Hillbrow's notorious establishments.

In the letter, the council expressed concern that police involvement undermined legitimate attempts to act against criminal activities in the area.

Six Hillbrow hotels have been raided since publication of the articles.

Maharaj told the committee that the co-owner of a hotel had been arrested for allegedly procuring children for child prostitution. Two others were arrested for facilitating exploitation of children.

'Virtually impossible to prove'

"Our task team appointed to investigate these sleazy hotels has had quite a bit of success," he said.

"They have already identified hotels that we will be targeting. We are working with the Asset Forfeiture Unit to confiscate these hotels.

"In four to five months, we will have made a real difference in dealing with this crime," he added.

In January, when the police were asked to comment on allegations that officers were accepting bribes from Hillbrow hotel and club owners, Johannesburg police spokesperson Superintendent Chris Wilken replied: "This office, to its knowledge, has not charged any member for accepting money from owners".

Last month, Maharaj said no police involvement could be proved "at this stage".

On Tuesday, he declined to give further details of the probe into police involvement, saying this could jeopardise the investigation.

He also described the difficulties police faced in proving that the owners of sleazy hotels were aware of the criminal activities taking place on their properties.

"The big problem in this regard is (the) requirement that the owner of the premises must be aware that there are illegal activities taking place in the building.

"It is virtually impossible to prove that, as some of the owners stay overseas," he said.

Maharaj also addressed the crime situation in Pretoria, saying the impression that criminals were moving from Johannesburg to Pretoria was a wrong one.

"There have been some high-profile crimes in Pretoria, which created the impression that crime there is now higher. But crime in Johannesburg is still higher than in Pretoria.

"This is despite the fact that crime in the policing areas of Johannesburg had declined tremendously in the past eight months, including hijacking. With hijacking, for example, Pretoria is fourth on the list of areas most affected."

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-03-06 20:55:06*

Senior cop appointed to probe sleaze dens

By Lynne Altenroxel

Sharma Maharaj, Gauteng's police commissioner, has appointed a senior policeman to supervise investigations into Hillbrow's seedy hotels and clubs.

This follows the publication in The Star on Thursday of a letter from the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council to police that alleges that police are involved in "at least six, large" shady nightclubs in Hillbrow.

Maharaj's office has denied that the letter, which was addressed to "The Area Commissioner, South African Police Services, Gauteng", was addressed to him.

"There is no area commissioner, Gauteng. There is a provincial commissioner Gauteng and an area commissioner Johannesburg," Director Henriette Bester, a spokesperson, said.

No one has 'opened a case saying police are involved'

In a statement released on Thursday, Maharaj said stringent action would be taken against any police officer found contravening regulations.

"The so-called letter is in fact a report that was compiled by a representative of the council after a strategy meeting and clean-up operation that was held in Hillbrow in conjunction with the local police and other role players. The allegations concerning police involvement were concerns raised by the police and are therefore no mystery.

"Alleged police involvement in these businesses was investigated, and at this stage no involvement could be proven."

Maharaj said he had appointed Godfrey Lebeya, an assistant commissioner, from his office "to supervise the investigations into criminal activities at the hotels and clubs concerned".

Meanwhile, Mike Moriarty, Johannesburg's Democratic Alliance leader, said on Thursday he would be willing to lay charges against corrupt police to ensure that

action was taken.

He was responding to comments by Superintendent Chris Wilken, a police spokesperson, who said police needed complaints and that no one had yet "come forward and opened a case saying police are involved".

"If he wants me to lay any charges, I'm happy to go to the nearest police station to do so," Moriarty said.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-02-01 21:10:09*

Police have a hand in Jo'burg's sleaze hotels

By Lynne Altenroxel

There is growing evidence that police are involved in - and even own - some of the seedy hotels, clubs and shebeens in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

This could explain the lack of action against illegal activities in this notorious district.

Sources have described police involvement in Hillbrow's clubs as common knowledge.

The Star has also been leaked a copy of an official letter, written in August last year, in which the urban planning and development office of the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council writes about the "clear involvement" of police.

'The most serious problem is the clear involvement of SAP members'

The letter, addressed to Sharma Maharaj, Gauteng's police commissioner; Senior Superintendent Danie Louw, the Hillbrow station supervisor; and Ketso Gordhan, the former city manager, describes action taken to clean up the inner city.

Among the "general problem areas" described in the missive is police ownership of shady nightclubs, many of which "are being conducted in direct conflict with the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Act".

The letter states: "Information received from the SAPS indicates that the availability of drugs at many of these venues is of concern, as is the number of illegal or stolen firearms and items found, like cellphones, etc.

"The most serious problem is the clear involvement of SAP (sic) members in many of these businesses. From information obtained from SAPS members and the information obtained by the Enforcement Unit, at least six large businesses were identified as having police involvement.

"This involvement varied from business ownership with people acting as managers, or simply being on the sites acting as strong men or protectors in the business.

'The letter's from August and nothing's been done'

"There is no doubt that this involvement undermines any legitimate attempt at rectifying the situation."

Police regulations forbid officers from involvement in any business without written

permission from the national or provincial commissioner, and state that permission will not be granted for involvement in brothels, security services (including acting as bouncers) and any aspect of the liquor trade.

National Instruction 5 of 2000 states: "A member commits misconduct if he or she, without the written permission of the national or provincial commissioner, engages directly or indirectly in any trade or business."

Mike Moriarty, the Democratic Alliance's Johannesburg leader, said clear police involvement compromised police and hindered them in taking action.

"The other appalling aspect is that this (the letter) has been hanging around since August and nothing has been done."

Superintendent Chris Wilken, Johannesburg's area commissioner spokesperson, described the allegations as rumours, but said his office's legal department had begun an inter-departmental investigation.

"This is all based on allegations. No one has yet come forward and opened a case saying police are involved," he said. "We need concrete evidence, we need complainants."

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-01-31 21:25:04*

Europa reporter receives death threat

The reporter from The Star who exposed the activities and owner of Hillbrow's Europa Hotel has received a death threat.

Lynne Altenroxel was called just after 3pm on Monday by an unidentified man.

He told her he was calling in connection with the story about "Big Luis" - Europa owner Luis Ferreira.

"You've got a nice family, Lynne. We'll cut up your family. We'll kill your children. We'll cut your p..s out," the man said before hanging up.

The Star editor Peter Sullivan said the threats were being taken seriously. "We're aware of the threats, which we take seriously and have taken the necessary precautions. We hope that the police also take the threats seriously and will follow up on Lynne's excellent work."

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-01-29 21:25:06*

There is a way to close Hillbrow brothel

Meet Luis "Big Luis" Ferreira - the man who owns Europa Hotel, one of the most infamous child brothels in Johannesburg.

Eleven child prostitutes were taken into custody on the premises in a police and military raid on December 16, and the hotel has been the scene of several murders over the past two decades.

On Monday, The Star can link the hotel and its activities to Ferreira - something the authorities have failed to do and have consistently used as an excuse to allow the hotel to continue operating.

Authorities such as the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions have so far failed to close the place down - even though the same legislation that has been used against the upmarket brothel, The Ranch, could be used to do so.

'It's not a secret that it's a hotel for child prostitutes'

Many people are puzzled about the apparent lack of action against Europa, and allegations of police corruption are rife.

"It's not a secret that it's a hotel for child prostitutes. What amazes me is that everybody knows it, and nobody does anything about it," said one military reservist, who was involved in last month's raid.

One of the obstacles to closing down the Europa is linking it with its true owner, who has listed the hotel under several different companies in the recent past, rather than his own name.

But Ferreira can be linked to the hotel in several ways:

- Firstly, through a close corporation, Apollo Hotels, in which he has 100 percent shares. Europa's telephone account - on which Ferreira owes Telkom nearly R8 000 - is in the name of Apollo Hotels.

The police had no authority to close down such sites

- He is also the sole director of the registered owner of the hotel, a company called Rulihon Investments.
- At least one former staffer, who lodged a labour complaint with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), has listed both Ferreira and Apollo Hotels as the owners. Six CCMA cases were lodged against the Europa Hotel last year.
- Allan Wheeler, the Eastern metropolitan council's head of law enforcement, said the council had learnt that Ferreira is the owner by interviewing staff.
- The Star has confirmed Ferreira's ownership through independent staff interviews.

University of Natal criminologist Ted Leggett described the lack of action as puzzling.

"Clearly, corruption is one possibility, but it is difficult to imagine that any police officer could be so inhuman as to take money to protect child prostitution rackets," he said.

Last year, Leggett wrote about the need for the seizure of Johannesburg's "sleazy hotels" under the forfeiture provisions of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act - the legislation used against The Ranch.

The act makes provision for the civil forfeiture of assets that constitute the proceeds of crime and property used to commit crime ("an instrumentality of an offence").

Offences it may be used against include rape and contravention of the Sexual Offences Act (No 23, 1957), such as child prostitution. The act also specifies offences such as:

- Unlawful carnal intercourse with a girl under a specified age;
- Committing an immoral or indecent act with a girl or a boy under a specified age;
- Soliciting or enticing such girls or boys to the commission of an immoral or

indecent act.

All except one of the dozen 12 to 16 year-old girls found on the property during last month's raid admitted to being sex workers, and the arrested adult sex workers paid admission-of-guilt fines.

This means there are grounds to argue that, in terms of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, the Europa is an "instrumentality of an offence" and could thus be seized under its civil forfeiture provisions.

Ferreira may then stand to lose his property unless he is able to prove in court that the profits he made on the hotel were obtained lawfully and that he neither knew nor had reasonable grounds to suspect that the hotel was being used for crime.

Men using the prostitution services on offer at Europa negotiate a fee with sex workers, but pay the hotel R50 for the use of a hotel room before being escorted upstairs. At the very least, Ferreira should be able to investigate why so many people are paying for the use of the rooms each night.

According to Louis de Koker, a legal expert at the Centre for the Study of Economic Crime at the Rand Afrikaans University, the lack of action is astounding.

"The Prevention of Organised Crime Act provides extremely powerful instruments with which the criminal justice system can clean up Hillbrow," he said.

But Superintendent Chris Wilken, a police spokesperson, said the police had no authority to close down such sites.

Asked about the allegations of corruption, he said: "We do not know if these rumours are true or untrue. This office, to its knowledge, has not charged any member for accepting money from owners."

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-01-28 18:40:09*

Hilbrow sleaze: police put on the spot

What is the police's attitude to sleazy Hillbrow hotels? We asked Superintendent Chris Wilken, area head of Johannesburg communication services, for answers:

Please explain the problems police have in closing Hillbrow's residential hotels/brothels. Why is there an apparent lack of action against them?

In terms of the Sexual Offences Act, the owner or manager of a place can be prosecuted if he knowingly allows prostitution on such premises. In terms of the said act, the police have no authority to close down such premises.

It is practically very difficult to successfully prove the guilt of owners of premises or persons living off the proceeds of prostitution (pimps) because the prostitutes usually do not co-operate with the police.

What action have police taken?

Action against individual perpetrators has been taken, and child prostitutes have been removed to places of safety.

There are a lot of rumours about police officers, particularly from Hillbrow and Johannesburg Central police stations, accepting bribes from various hotel owners. What is your comment on this? Have you ever convicted any police officers for accepting a bribe from these people? Or are these rumours simply untrue?

We do not know whether these rumours are true or untrue. Immediate action will be taken against any member accepting bribes in this regard. This office, to its knowledge, has not charged any member for accepting money from owners.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-01-28 18:25:12*

Why is this den still open?

The excuses

"The issue of closing hotels lies with local government. The police are not the ones to close it down." - Mnyani Mangezi, spokesperson, Gauteng department of safety

"I can't understand why the police are finding it difficult to close it down. They don't have to close the building - they just have to close down the prostitution operation." - Jameel Chand, spokesperson, Johannesburg city council

"It is practically very difficult to successfully prove the guilt of owners of premises or persons living off the proceeds of prostitution (pimps) because the prostitutes usually do not give their co-operation to the police." - Superintendent Chris Wilken, area head, Johannesburg communication services, South African Police Service

The puzzle

"It's not a secret that it's a hotel for child prostitutes. What amazes me is that everybody knows it and nobody does anything about it." - Military reservist involved in the December raid on Europa Hotel

"In most cases they (the hotels in question) do not meet any of the standards. If there was a fire in some of these buildings, people would die in large numbers." - Allan Wheeler, enforcement officer, Eastern Metropolitan Council

"How can they close The Ranch, but they can't close the Europa?" - Dr Elna MacIntosh, sexologist

"It's a puzzle." - Ted Leggett, criminologist, University of Natal, on why he believes Johannesburg's sleazy hotels have not been closed.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2001-01-28 18:25:12*

Jo'burg battles to close 'dens of iniquity'

By Melanie-Ann Feris

More than 40 entertainment venues, mostly in Hillbrow, are operating in contravention of Johannesburg's by-laws.

But in the space of four months, the Johannesburg municipality has managed to obtain a court order to close down only the entertainment sections of one of the places, the Lloyd Hotel in Hillbrow. The hotel will, however, still be able to run its rooms.

The other entertainment venues that have been operating in contravention of the city's by-laws include the Mimosa Hotel in Claim Street, The Base nightclub in Twist Street, the Summit Club in Claim Street, the Ambassador Hotel - known as a

prostitute hangout, and bars like Chocolate City and the Princess Bar.

Most of these places were known as hangouts for sex workers and drug dealers to ply their business.

'If there was a fire in some of these buildings, many people would die'

A visit to the Mimosa Hotel by The Star on Wednesday showed young men openly selling drugs.

One of the men screamed as The Star attempted to photograph the outside of the building. A gun shot was heard as reporters drove away.

"If the court orders for the other places go unopposed, we will close down most of the nightclubs and hotels," said Allan Wheeler, enforcement officer for the Johannesburg Council.

"We are in court with four or five of the venues and a number already have been served. Unfortunately, the courts are closed until next year so there is not much we can do now," he said.

According to Wheeler, the Europa Hotel - where child prostitutes were arrested during a recent raid - is on the list as a priority for next year.

"From a practical point of view, police can't go in and say: 'You are a hijacker, we will close you down', but we can use our by-laws and act," said Wheeler.

He said most of the places identified were in contravention of health, food, building and fire control by-laws.

"In most cases, they do not meet any of the standards. If there was a fire in some of these buildings people would die in large numbers," he said.

The decision to clamp down on the venues comes after a meeting of stakeholders, including the police, Business Against Crime, and the health and town planning authorities, convened by the council, to look at cleaning it up. Hillbrow was one of the places targeted.

Senior Superintendent Danie Louw, head of crime prevention in Hillbrow, said they were waiting for council to act on the buildings.

"We can't do anything until the court orders have been served. With the festive season, it would have been better if they (the venues) were closed," he said.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-12-20 20:55:06*

Cops, council ignoring child prostitute hotel

By Lynne Altenroxel

No one - not the police nor the council - is working on measures aimed at closing the controversial Europa Hotel in Hillbrow, where child prostitutes were apprehended during a recent raid.

Responding to inquiries from The Star, the police said the difficulty lay in the fact that they needed to obtain sufficient evidence against a responsible person, not against a property.

"Owners of notorious establishments such as Europa Hotel often plead innocence when confronted about the grisly activities which take place on their premises and can be extraordinarily difficult to convict," according to the police.

They added that they were not in the business of closing down such properties and were only charged with investigating crimes which occur on a property.

Children as young as seven can be charged with sex crimes

On the other hand, the Johannesburg Council said that the Europa Hotel was one of 60 so-called "places of entertainment" which were being targeted in a bid to clean up the Hillbrow area.

But the council said it was more interested in adherence to municipal by-laws than in "moralistic" issues. Officials usually try to co-operate with owners and court battles usually ensued when owners failed to co-operate.

Several hotels in Hillbrow have already been served with court orders, and the Europa can probably expect to be served with similar papers soon.

Meanwhile, it has emerged that children as young as seven can be charged with sex crimes for being prostitutes - but police seldom take criminal action against them.

In this regard the fact that 12 child prostitutes removed from Europa Hotel during last Friday's raid were not charged with soliciting is nothing unusual, The Star has learnt.

The children, aged between 12 and 16, were taken to places of safety by social workers after the massive raid at Europa.

In legal terms, all of them could be charged with sexual offences on the grounds that, according to South African law, a child reaches criminal liability at the age of seven.

But this is about to change. Recommendations under discussion at the South African Law Commission include a proposal that child prostitutes are made immune from prosecution until the age of 18.

One of the major dilemmas confronting the commission is the prosecution of people living off the proceeds of child sex in cases where child prostitution is indulged in for survival.

A lot of sexually active children are involved in this for survival, said Joan van Niekerk, chairperson of Childline. She said it remained very difficult to prove links between child prostitutes and their pimps - a perennial problem, underlined by the fact that only sex workers were arrested during the Europa raid.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-12-19 19:55:12*

Child-sex trade on rise in SA - rights group

By Steven Swindells

South Africa's child-sex industry is growing, mainly due to legal loopholes that allow child exploitation to go unpunished, welfare groups said on Thursday.

Molo Songololo, a rights group based in Cape Town, released a report that gave details of economically desperate and violent parents selling children as young as four to local and foreign crime syndicates who then forced them into a burgeoning

sex trade.

"The trafficking of children for sexual exploitation is increasing because there is more demand, mainly from men from here and overseas," said Karin Koen, the chief researcher at Molo Songololo.

'There may be more than 38 000 child prostitutes in South Africa'

Prosecutions for paedophilia in South Africa are rare and welfare groups fear the country may emerge as a safe haven for so-called "sex tourism" after signs that authorities in Asia and Europe were clamping down on the practice.

A Cambodian court this week sentenced a British headmaster to three years in prison for filming girls as young as eight performing lewd acts.

Separately, a Frenchman was sentenced last month to seven years in jail after a landmark court case found him guilty of child rape during a "sex holiday" in Thailand.

"There are reports that there could be 38 000 child prostitutes in South Africa. It may be more. Poverty plays a big part," Koen said.

Many child sex workers operate in Cape Town, a tourist mecca which is fast becoming one of the world's top sex tourism destinations, according to the country's welfare department.

'The child is used as a surrogate wife, to cook and clean'

Delegates at an international conference on child abuse held in South Africa earlier this year heard that children were often sold to brothels, clubs and individuals in what amounted to modern-day slave markets.

Of 2 000 prostitutes arrested in Cape Town, a quarter were minors. Criminal groups from Angola, Bulgaria and Thailand, Chinese Triads and even the Russian Mafia were behind the trade, said Molo Songololo.

Children from Mozambique were trucked through via the Kruger national park.

Children from eastern Europe, south-east Asia and neighbouring states such as Angola and Zimbabwe were also regularly smuggled into South Africa, according to police and welfare groups.

"These children are typically debt-bonded, sold, abducted and held in captivity," said Molo Songololo.

"The child is used as a surrogate wife, to cook and clean for him. She is raped and sexually and physically assaulted repeatedly," said the group.

Separate studies have discovered cases of children who have been orphaned by Aids ending up in the sex industry and also of children as young as eight bought for a little food.

Cases of child prostitution highlighted by the Sowetan newspaper include a Mozambican mother who was arrested after allegedly renting out her daughters, aged seven and 10, as sex workers on a Johannesburg motorway extension for R200 a week. - Reuters

'Child raped every 30 minutes in SA'

Every 30 minutes a child is raped in South Africa, according to the police, and official statistics show that police deal with more than 40 000 cases of all forms of crime against children a year.

This was revealed by Jackie Loffell of the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society at the 13th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect in Durban on Wednesday.

Loffell said South Africa's history of racial and colonial domination made the country a fertile ground for the maltreatment of children.

She said the country needed an efficient and well-resourced child protective system backed by tough legislation. "Poverty obstructed the fulfilment of children's rights, especially the right to protection from maltreatment," she said.

Loffell challenged South Africa, as a signatory of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, to uphold the full range of children's rights.

One of the potential dangers in implementing child protection laws in a developing country like South Africa was a rudimentary infrastructure that was likely to be ineffective or at worst damaging, she said.

Delegates from other Africa countries said there were major discrepancies between Western and customary laws on issues dealing with child abuse.

"Botswana undermines the rights of children as there is no (clear) legal definition of a child," said Gwen Lesetedi from the department of sociology at the University of Botswana.

For instance, children under seven were defined as infants, those under 14 as children and those below 17 as juveniles. These definitions made it difficult for legislation on issues regarding children to be implemented.

Lesetedi said the most vulnerable group among children in Botswana were those under 16 because of early pregnancies. - Own Correspondent

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-09-06 20:25:19*

Pimp parents jailed, sex offenders walk free

A mother and stepfather who pimped their children for almost six years were sentenced to 39 and 50 years in jail respectively on Monday, while the men who had sex with the girls walked free from the Pretoria regional court.

Charges against the men had been withdrawn when the men turned state witnesses.

The case, which was described by magistrate Renier Boshoff as one of the worst he had ever heard, caused public outcry when it became known that the couple sold the three girls for sex for as little as R5 between 1993 and 1998.

In addition to being forced to have sex with men, the children also had to play strip-poker with their stepfather and his brother, or they were tied up with rope. The 30-year-old man and 40-year-old woman, from a town near Pretoria, kept the money in a jar.

The children also had to play strip-poker with their stepfather

The youngest daughter was only six years old when her stepfather raped her and started to indecently assault her. Not only did she have to accompany the man to work where he kept a mattress and pornographic material, but he also took her to a river, where he molested her. Her sisters were aged 10 and 12 when their ordeal started.

"You were in positions of trust and authority. You misused this horribly over a long period. Both of you enjoyed financial gain from this," Boshoff said.

He said that according to reports, both adults showed little prognosis for rehabilitation, blamed the children for their position and had shown no remorse.

"You acted unscrupulously and without mercy. Monstrous crimes like these deserve a sentence of imprisonment."

The magistrate took into account that the couple were first offenders with low intellectual abilities.

'Monstrous crimes'

Both were in special schools, and the stepfather left school in standard five.

The stepfather, who was found guilty on three charges of rape, three charges of child abuse, two of assault, one of indecent assault and one charge of prostitution, was sentenced to 50 years effective imprisonment.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-10-30 21:25:06*

Sentence delay for parents who pimped kids

Sentencing of a husband and wife who were found guilty of pimping the woman's three small daughters was postponed in the Pretoria Regional Court on Wednesday because the defence advocate could not be there for the sentencing.

The couple, from a town west of Pretoria, allegedly used their daughters as sex slaves over a six-year period. One was pimped from the age of 5. Her parents were paid as little as R5 a time.

The couple, found guilty of rape, accessory to rape, child abuse, child molestation and assault, will be sentenced on October 30.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-10-17 20:55:09*

Mother caught pimping underage daughters

A Diepsloot mother has been arrested after police reportedly discovered she was selling her two under-age daughters to Mozambican nationals for sex. The 30-year-old mother and a 26-year-old client from Maputo were expected to appear in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court on Monday.

Police spokesperson Captain Morne van Wyk said the discovery was made at 10am on Saturday, when police raided a house in Diepsloot Extension 1.

"They found the man raping the 10-year-old daughter while her seven-year-old sister was told to watch. Apparently, the Mozambican had arranged to pay the mother R200 a month to have sex with her two daughters. It had already been going on for three weeks."

He said a district surgeon's examination of the 10-year-old daughter confirmed she had been raped.

"The seven-year-old daughter had not yet been touched, but had apparently been told by the mother to sit next to the bed and watch her sister having sex so that she would know what to do later," he said.

The two children have been taken to place of safety.

Captain Carel Cornelius explained that this kind of crime is not uncommon in poorer areas.

"In April, we found another mother who was pimping her 11-year-old daughter. We found the mother was a prostitute and felt her daughter should follow in her footsteps. The mother has been detained," he said.

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-07-02 20:25:10*

Sex-slave trade in kids 'thriving' - expert

A lack of proper legislation was creating a lucrative sex market in South Africa in which children as young as four were becoming sex slaves, according to a report by a Cape Town children's organisation.

Bernadette van Vuuren of Molo Songololo presented the organisation's report to the 13th International Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Durban on Tuesday.

The preliminary report contains shocking statistics about children who are sold, abducted and even coerced into the child sex market in the country.

A large number of children are smuggled in from outside the country's borders, from countries such as Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Thailand and Eastern Europe.

They viewed children as safe-sex options

Children as young as eight are smuggled in from Mozambique.

They are trucked in through the Kruger National Park or the Swaziland border and some have been sold to South Africans for between R300 and R500 a child.

Among those involved in trafficking in children were brothel owners, government officials, crime syndicates, former military and police personnel and border officials. Sometimes family members and even parents were involved.

Farmers, businessmen, doctors, high-ranking government officials, police officers, gangs, foreign tourists and even other children paid to have sex with children.

Van Vuuren said trafficking in children had become one of the most lucrative businesses for transnational crime syndicates, including Nigerian drug lords, Chinese Triads, Israeli and Russian mafias as well as East European crime syndicates.

Nigerian drug lords, Chinese Triads, Israeli and Russian mafias involved

Organised crime groups have managed to gain a foothold in the country since it

opened up to the international community after 1994.

According to Van Vuuren, South Africa was emerging as a key player in the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation - from inside the country and from across its borders.

Adults scared of contracting the HIV/Aids virus viewed children as safe-sex options. Some of those who had Aids believed sex with children could cure them.

The United Nations has estimated that between two and four million people a year were traded into some kind of slavery, be it domestic labour, begging or prostitution. Many of these were children.

"Gaps and lack of extra-territorial legislation in South Africa fuelled the growth of the trafficking trade in the country," said Van Vuuren.

According to the report, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban were the main centres for child trafficking, but the phenomenon was occurring on a countrywide scale.

Childline representative Lyndy Mansfield earlier on Tuesday told delegates how children as young as eight were being abducted from rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal and sold on the slave market in Durban.

The children were kept prisoner in shacks from where they were sold to adults who wanted sex. The trend came to the attention of Childline about four months ago, she said.

The Molo Songololo report said that many of the victims were between 4 and 17.

They included children who struggled to survive, children who had run away from places of safety or those orphaned by HIV/Aids.

Van Vuuren said there had been a 400 percent increase in Aids orphans in South Africa and by 2010 nearly five million children would be orphaned by the disease.

These children were the most vulnerable to trafficking and the sexual exploitation trade.

She said the government had to develop anti-trafficking legislation as well as an extra-territorial policy to intervene and rescue victims from other countries. - Sapa

[CAPE TIMES](#) *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-09-05 23:15:38*

Mother City 'hosts regular child sex tours'

Cape Town was fast becoming the child sex tourism destination of the world, Andre Viviers, assistant director in the department of welfare, said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a children's rights conference, Viviers said: "Sex tours in much the same fashion as the wine route tours are being organised regularly."

He accused law enforcement officials of turning a blind eye for fear of hurting the country's tourism industry, and said many were accepting bribes to keep quiet.

On the causes of child prostitution, Viviers said poverty, domestic violence, dysfunctional families, as well as cultural beliefs, were among the main reasons for children becoming involved in the sex industry.

The fear of HIV/Aids was also a contributing factor, as some "customers" preferred having sex with children and virgins, believing it was safer than making use of the services of older sex workers.

The conference also heard that child labour was prevalent in South Africa. According to Mandisa Pamla, a senior administration officer in the Department of Labour, 1996 statistics put the figure at about 400 000 children between the ages of 10 and 16.

Pamla said the department was currently working on a policy to clear up confusion over the status of working children between the ages of 15 and 18.

According to legislation children were compelled to attend school up to the age of 15, while the prohibition on child labour applied to all those under 18. This meant that those leaving school at 15 were not allowed to work for the next three years.

She said poverty was one of the main reasons forcing children to work, while the HIV/Aids pandemic also contributed by rendering many parentless and with no alternative. One of the department's biggest concerns was replacing the income of children being removed from the employment sector, many of whom were supporting entire families. - Sapa

The Star *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-08-23 21:40:14*

Vulnerable youth 'used' by night-clubs

By Krisendra Bisetty and Jani Meyer

Vulnerable, destitute teenagers in parts of Durban are being targeted by unscrupulous operators in the entertainment industry to engage in activities ranging from prostitution to drug trafficking, a Durban council manager has claimed.

Sipho Mbatha, manager of youth programmes in the Durban central councils, made the claims in an interview with the Daily News following the alleged club rivalry and gangsterism that led to the death of 13 school-children at the Throb night-club in Chatsworth last week.

There were some clubs, video arcades and even taverns in Durban that were merely fronts for illicit activities, Mbatha alleged.

Since last December, nine pupils and two street-children had complained to his office about the goings-on at several entertainment businesses.

Point Police Station commissioner Superintendent Fanie Booysen said the police were aware of drug-related problems in the area and operations were being conducted in an attempt to stamp out such crimes.

He said some clubs had been identified as problem areas where under-age patrons were concerned.

"The problem is that many of the kids go to the club with their parents," Booysen said.

In a recent raid at the Lonsdale Hotel in West Street, Booysen said he saw the largest number of young girls he had ever seen at a hotel.

Another problem was the high number of runaways.

Mbatha said the running of clubs and video arcades provided the perfect cover.

"There is a tavern in Chatsworth, run by a syndicate, where prostitution and drug abuse by children are rife."

Mbatha has called for a judicial commission of inquiry into the granting of licences to these establishments, as well as others that were clearly structurally unsound.

Deputy President Jacob Zuma will attend the memorial service of the 13 killed in a stampede at Chatsworth's Throb nightclub last Friday.

Education Minister Kader Asmal will also attend the memorial service.

But President Thabo Mbeki will not be present as he leaves on Sunday for the Africa-European Union summit in Egypt to discuss co-operation between the two continents. He is expected back next Thursday.

DailyNews *Published on the Web by IOL on 2000-03-29 09:22:26*