

SUMMER 2007 ISSUE 2

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NEWS

UN trafficking rep under house arrest in Bangladesh

Sigma Huda, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children, has been told by the Government of Bangladesh that she is not permitted to travel abroad as she is a "security risk" and "may give statements detrimental to this Government."



Sigma Huda

"The detention of Ms Huda within Bangladesh is a denial by the Government of Bangladesh of her inalienable right to freedom of movement and a direct attack on both the principles and the institution of the United Nations," said the Institute on Religion and Public Policy president Joseph K. Grieboski.

"Denying Ms Huda the right to travel undermines her capacity to fulfil her duties as Special Rapporteur and violates her immunity under the United Nations Convention on Privileges and Immunities, Article 22, Section 6".

Despite having a High Court order permitting her to attend the United Nations in New York at the Permanent Forum for Indigenous People and the Human Rights Council Session, her official mission visit to Belarus and her attendance at a conference in Lund, Sweden, Huda was denied exit from Bangladesh by airport authorities. On her fourth attempt to depart the country, she was informed of an order by the Chief Justice restraining her from leaving the country indefinitely.

"Sigma Huda represents the pinnacle of global public service, advocating on behalf of the voiceless and the exploited," continued Grieboski. "Her illegal and unjust treatment at the hands of the Bangladesh Caretaker Government is a crime against her fundamental rights, a crime against her constitutional rights and a crime against all those who fight for victimised and exploited women and children around the world."

Radicals tell Palestinian television presenters: 'wear a veil or die'

Women presenters at the official Palestine Television Station in Gaza have received death threats from a radical Islamic group for refusing to wear a veil on camera.

In a leaflet distributed in Gaza at the beginning of June, the Righteous Swords of Islam threatened to "slaughter" the women for corrupting Palestinian morals.

"It is disgraceful that the women working for the official Palestinian media are competing with each other to display their charms," the fundamentalist group said in a leaflet. "We will destroy their homes. We will blow up their work places. We have a lot of information about their addresses and we are following their movements."

All 15 presenters reported for work despite the threats. "We will carry on working", said a spokeswoman. "Of course we are afraid, but we will be careful. Work is our obligation."

Director-General of Palestine TV Mohammed al-Dahoudi said the station is taking the threats seriously.

Yarl's Wood protesters

Women in Yarl's Wood Removal Centre launched a protest last month following a threat by SERCO (which in April won an £87m contract to run Yarl's Wood) to introduce new measures. These include locking women in their rooms from 7pm-7am and confiscating mobile phones.

Almost 200 women took part in the protests, which involved corridor-marching, with banners made out of bed sheets, and a hunger strike.

A 2006 Legal Action for Women (LAW) investigation into Yarl's Wood - before SERCO took over - found that 70% of women had reported rape; nearly half had been detained for more than three months; 57% had no legal representa-



tion; and 20% had lawyers who demanded cash before taking action. Women also reported sexual and racial intimidation by the guards.

Since SERCO took over, conditions have deteriorated, according to the detainees, who report that racism, sexual violence, theft and profiteering from guards is rife.

Women are demanding an end to these de-meaning practices, along with better healthcare and better food.

REVIEW: RAPE ON TRIAL

Two high-level conferences in two weeks placed rape in the spotlight, dissecting the issues:

23-24 May 2007 Prosecuting Rape conference for rape co-ordinators (ACPO & CPS)

1 June 2007 Rape, the Media and the CJS (Lilith/Eaves & Mayor's Office)

The conferences focused on the unacceptable rate of attrition for UK rape cases, exploring ways to change the status quo. Currently around 5.3% of rape trials result in conviction, with rapists running a mere 1% risk of punishment.

The *Prosecuting Rape* conference (PRC) was dominated by police and lawyers, with speakers including medical experts, academics and judges. *Rape, the Media & the Criminal Justice System* (RMCJ) was a multi-agency fusion of women's sector representatives, journalists, public bodies, law enforcement and academics. Speakers included US & UK legal experts, journalists, survivors and providers from the front line.

A multitude of factors were identified as pivotal in improving justice; some were met with broad consensus, others prompted intense debate and some exposed deep schisms between policy-makers, service providers and criminal justice professionals.

For more details contact Helen Atkins at helen.atkins@eaveshousing.co.uk.

Violence against women in parliament FGM protection

Baroness Ashton, 15 May 2007

In addition to the criminal protection of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, victims of FGM may make an application for civil protection under Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 as amended by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 or the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, depending upon the circumstances of the case.

VAW strategies

David Drew & Vernon Coaker,
16 May 2007



Labour MP for Stroud David Drew asked Vernon Coaker if he will be developing a strategic framework within government to address the issue of violence against women.

Coaker's response: "The Government takes a strategic approach to addressing VAW, through linked plans on domestic violence (including forced marriage and honour-based violence), sexual violence and trafficking. Strategic work on sexual and domestic violence will be further integrated over the coming year, developing a coordinated community response to these crimes."



Trafficking in children a problem, admits Home Office report

A report released by the Home Office on 11 June identifies 330 children in the UK as having been trafficked or likely to have been trafficked. Key findings of the report include:

- 185 were girls (56%), 140 were boys (42%)
- 183 have gone missing from care (56%)
- 105 (76%) of the boys are missing from care
- The top five source countries are China (72), Nigeria (38) Vietnam (22), Afghanistan(19) and Eritrea (14)
- 63 of 72 (88%) Chinese children have gone missing
- 300 (91%) children were between 14-17 years old
- Those trafficked for domestic servitude range from 12-17 years of age
- The youngest child brought to the UK by unrelated guardian for unknown purposes was nine months old. A child of four is suspected of being brought in for illegal adoption.
- Children have passed through the following nine air ports: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, East Midlands, Belfast, Prestwick and Doncaster-Robin Hood
- Many children enter the UK with no passports or false passports. Determining country of origin is dependent on child's claim and language used
- Most children have come from poor families with little access to education
- Children trafficked from Africa for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude tend to be most destitute

The report: *A Scoping Project on Child Trafficking in the UK*, is available from the Home Office.

Sexual violence directory for Eaves

Eaves' Lilith Project has launched a directory for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted. The directory, which lists support agencies in London and the Home Counties, will be sent to doctors' surgeries, social services, housing units and women's officers in universities. For copies contact Cat Whitehouse at the Lilith Project on 020 7840 7959.

Trigger unhappy: youth violence in London

The murder of teenage boys by their peers has been well documented this year. But what of the women and girls caught in the crossfire, asks **Helen Atkins**

To date, 2007 has seen an unprecedented spate of peer youth murders, both in London and across the UK, carried out using guns and knives; either murderous revenge for trivial acts or unmotivated random attacks. In certain London boroughs children miss school rather than risk crossing paths with rival teen gangs. According to one gang member, "it's about postcodes" – letters and numbers triggering intense personal hatred.

Lack of control

Domestic violence, serious loss and overcrowding are common components of gang members' home lives. The absence of positive role models (about half of UK marriages now end in divorce) contribute to low self-esteem and a lack of confidence, stimulating negative attitudes and disruptive behaviour.

The domination of multi-media



means that parents cannot effectively control, or even monitor, what their children absorb. Ultra-violent adult video games, explicit music and graphic films can be downloaded with ease, but without ID. The unprecedented availability of dangerous weapons, via the internet, is another technological

advancement contributing to a growing loss of innocence – and consequently of life – supplemented by the perennial availability of knives. Up to 60% of British children are regularly exposed to online pornography. The negative effects of viewing these hardcore images are immeasurable.

Girls and gangs

Unbalanced attention is given to crimes committed by girl gang members, with girl gangs described by *Time* magazine as "swarms of form-changing vampiric creatures", in stark contrast to "swaggering" or "boasting", which is how boy gangs are traditionally depicted.

Despite a string of violent, occasionally fatal, attacks by girls and young women in recent years, their involvement in gang violence

is little-documented compared with teenage boys and young men.

In April, Brunel University's Dr Sally Henry spoke of a "new kind of twisted feminism," inspired by aggressive women in hip-hop videos and a variation of the Spice Girl's 'grrl power' movement. Dr Henry believes that girls are no longer satisfied with being auxiliary gang members - available to male counterparts as sex objects and drug or gun mules only.

Ex-gang member and Crime Concern youth worker Andy Brown agrees: "I know girls who are into gun culture, and they are just as bad as the boys. In fact, they can be worse." However, a recent Youth Justice Board report, *Groups, Gangs & Weapons*, found that, on the whole, young women still tend to play a subsidiary role in gangs, rather than being co-offenders, with a generally negative attitude towards weapons.

Effects on women

It won't be long before clips of real-life torture porn appear on YouTube. Multiple assailant rape already forms part of a gang member's initiation, along with cutting and other torture; girls are used as gang property, physically, verbally and emotionally abused, used to carry drugs and guns and raped.

Hidden damage

There are currently no dedicated organisations for girls and women affected by group violence, but many experts see the issue as a ticking time-bomb, neglected and misunderstood by officials and members of the public. Girls involved with gangs are unlikely to report

sexual violence. In spite of the kneejerk response whenever girls in gangs hit the news, usually the harm caused to those involved bypasses the social radar, unnoticed and undocumented.

Caught in the crossfire

Since two teenage sisters were shot dead in Birmingham on New Year's Eve three-and-a-half years ago, there have been regular reports of girls and young women being caught in the crossfire of gang-related shootings across the UK. Last month a 16-year-old boy accidentally shot his 12-year-old sister in the head in Manchester. Despite the lack of intent, the easy availability of a loaded section 1 firearm in the family home illustrates the perilous normalcy of weapons.

Workable solutions

The From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation (FBMF) was established in 1996 to "empower young people to change their negative lifestyles by caring." Rather than seeking to address the problem of youth violence through increased policing and heavier penalties, FBMF advocates a practical and holistic solution, promoting qualifications over guns; peace and respect instead of violence and crime.

Similarly, with his 2006 film *Beyond Beats &*

Rhymes, US activist filmmaker and gender educator Byron Hurt defiantly deconstructs gender roles in hip-hop and rap music. Eaves is currently in talks to facilitate a UK visit by Hurt in early 2008 to host screenings of his film.

Poverty, exclusion, division and the accompanying raft of social problems must be coherently tackled, through an increase in funding for community-led youth initiatives (£500,000 for the Connected Fund, announced in April, is an encouraging start), in partnership with a rigorous multi-agency framework comprised of families,

Left behind

The majority of those wielding guns or knives are male, and the majority of perpetrators and victims of weapon crime are male. But prison or death leaves behind an inconsolable mother, a devastated sister, a suicidal girlfriend, a bewildered daughter.

Cascading harm

The effects of such upheavals ricochet across families and communities, perpetuating grief, anger and revenge. Mothers Against Guns (MAG) is one of the very few organisations with a female perspective. MAG was formed in 2002 by women affected by weapon crime, and provides counselling, advocacy and training for victims of gang violence.

www.mothersagainstguns.net
info@mothersagainstguns.net

public sector, schools, Government, law enforcement and the judiciary.

Reactionary steps such as increasing police powers are curative and two dimensional. The legislation is in place, and when implemented correctly, it is effective in punitive enforcement.

But if violent culture continues its meteoric rise in society's mainstream, whether in film, music, games or played out for real on the streets, more laws and tougher sentences will not stop adolescents murdering their peers.

Despite extensive evidence gathering into the harmful effects of off-street prostitution in 2005, police still put very few resources into investigating and combating the crime, says **Julie Bindel**



What we know about the off-street sex industry

The UK Government had, until 2003, shown little interest in policy and legislation on the sex industry. Although individual local governments and police forces periodically pilot new initiatives in tackling the problems of street prostitution, such as ASBOs (Anti Social Behaviour Orders) and ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts), very little has been done about indoor prostitution.

It is now even clearer that, despite evidence gathered by the Home Office Prostitution Review team on both outdoor and indoor prostitution, no action will be taken unless interested groups lobby the government to take forward the recommendations in *Paying the Price* (PTP), published in 2005.

There are a number of misconceptions about the differences between on- and off-street prostitution:

- Indoor prostitution is safer
- Women have more control off-street
- Pimps only work on-street
- Drug-using women always work on-street
- A 'better class' of customer visits off-street
- Safe sex is always practised off-street
- No underage women are involved
- Trafficking only occurs in unlicensed,

'seedy' venues

- Licensing protects women
- Licensed establishments have no links to crime
- Private flats are owned/rented by individual women and not exploiters/traffickers

Whereas on-street prostitution is at least partially visible, indoor prostitution often takes place in establishments masquerading as legitimate businesses eg massage parlours, saunas, lap-dancing clubs, and escort and marriage agencies.

The main problem in terms of gathering intelligence was summed up by an officer from REFLEX, who argued that, "Until police have the resources and ability to keep an eye on the saunas and massage parlours we will not really know the scale of the industry, or what goes on within it" (interview, 2005).

Monitoring process

Police monitoring of the off-street sex industry is essential to root out criminality and violence. The sex industry is growing at an alarming rate. As Janice Raymond points out in her paper on the impact of the sex industry in the European Union (Raymond 2004):

"One of the most visible developments in the

sex industry during the last 30 years has been its rapid expansion and massive diversification. Globalization of the economy means globalization of the sex industry, whether... sex trafficking, prostitution, mail order bride marketers, lap-dancing and other sex clubs, sex tourism or pornography. There are few countries in which the sex industry is shrinking.”

Research into the links between lap-dancing clubs and prostitution in London and Glasgow found that women working in such venues can be coerced into providing sexual services to customers, while club owners hide behind a façade of respectability (Bindel 2004). This helps to create the impression that while the businesses are legitimate, the women are not. Activities in such clubs are defined as ‘entertainment’ rather than ‘sexual services’, so clubs are regulated by the same licensing laws as pubs and night clubs.

Legalisation or decriminalisation?

Some governments have legalised or decriminalised prostitution to try and curb trafficking and other exploitation within the sex industry, arguing that if prostitution was properly regulated, child prostitution and trafficking could be eliminated. This has proved to be a failure. Research (eg Erikson 2003 and Raymond 2005) examining legal and policy regimes in four countries – Australia (the state of Victoria), Sweden, the Netherlands and Ireland – found that legalisation has helped the sector to flourish.

It has also long been assumed that involvement in off-street prostitution is far safer than street prostitution. However, research highlights the fact that indoor prostitution is also fraught with danger (Holsopple, K, 1998 and Raphael, J et al, 2004). One study of Leeds, Edinburgh and Glasgow shows that women involved in indoor prostitution suffer violence and abuse from customers but are less likely to report it to police than women involved on-street.

However, there is little research or acknowledgment about the dangers for women

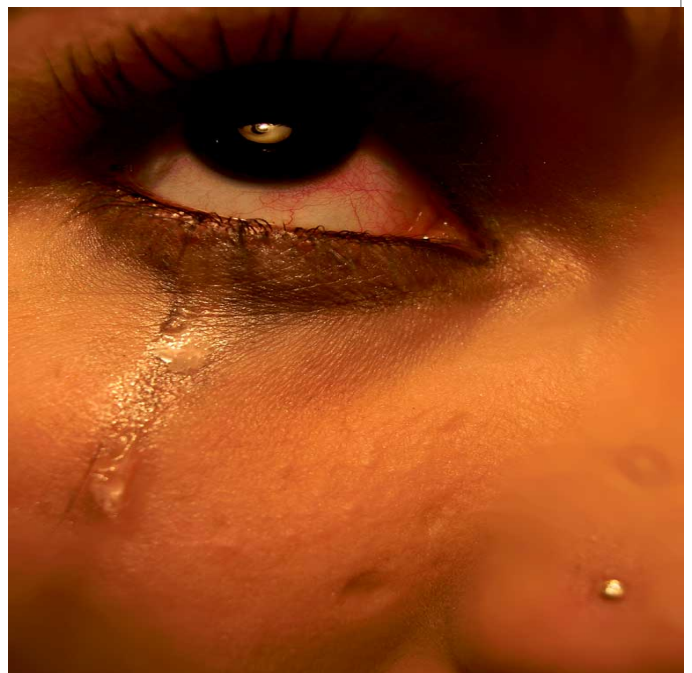
working in *all* aspects of the sex industry, such as in pornography, escort agencies and flats. One study, which looked at more than 500 women involved in all aspects of prostitution in South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA and Zambia, found the following had occurred while in prostitution:

- 62% had been raped
- 73% had experienced physical assault
- 72% were currently or formerly homeless
- 67% met the criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder B – a rate similar to that of battered women, rape victims and survivors of state-sponsored torture (Farley, 1998).

Similarly, another study in the same cities found that two-thirds of women had experienced violence from customers, and almost one-third had experienced attempted rape. (Barnard et al 2000).

Call to action

The lack of action since *PTP* is a disgrace. Since its publication, five women involved in prostitution were murdered in Ipswich, and others have been killed, raped and harmed in both indoor and street settings. Write to the Home Office to demand action, and to ask what has happened to the promises made by the Review Team. If we ignore this inaction we will not see another such review in our lifetime.



Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty

By Sarah Stephen-Smith
and Anna Bowden

“Abuse is wrong when it happens at the hands of tyrants and terrorists. It is equally wrong if it happens in the home.”



Shami Chakrabarti joined Liberty during what has arguably been one of the toughest periods of the organisation's existence. She started work on 9/11 and was at the helm as director four years later when the 2005 July bombings occurred.

“The last few years have been tough for Liberty - with both a large and a small ‘L’,” she says.

“People in politics and the media have been quick to argue that the rules of the game have changed - that human rights don't have value or resonance now and that we are supposed to be living in a permanent ‘War on Terror’. But this mis-named and mis-guided ‘war’ has left us not only less free but less safe as well. The ‘war’ has become a cover for a permanent state of emergency, which is said to excuse all sorts of abuse of speech and privacy rights, but also the horrors of internment and torture.

“Ironically, injustice and the ‘war’ language also allow terrorists to call themselves ‘soldiers’. People are increasingly distrustful of this approach. Liberty's job is to unite democrats of all parties around the values of universal rights, freedoms and the rule of law.”

Liberty's fight for freedom of expression within the context of a ‘War on Terrorism’ is understandable. But what of other forms of expression? Female genital mutilation and forced marriage, for example, are justified by some people as forms of expression. Should they play a part in society?

“There is absolutely no conflict between the fundamental rights of women to their dignity and autonomy and freedom of expression,” says Chakrabarti. “Freedom of expression is a vital but qualified right subject to necessary and proportionate limitation to protect others. There is no right to force your choices on your children and there is no greater right than protection from inhuman and degrading treatment.

“Both forced marriage and mutilation fall into this gravest

category of human rights' abuse. This abuse is wrong at the hands of tyrants and terrorists. It is equally wrong in the home. Human rights do not prescribe limitless tolerance nor homogeneity, but they do define the limits of diversity and cohesion.

“Ultimately, these rights belong to every individual human being rather than to groups or governments. Forced marriage and mutilation are always wrong.”

FGM and forced marriage are a form of violence against women. Are there many obstacles to ending violence against women today?

“Yes, but there are many opportunities as well. I believe that we will only make real progress when we demand more women in vital institutions such as Parliament, the senior judiciary and the highest levels of policing. Equally, however, those of us who are mothers of sons have a responsibility to instill in them the values of equal dignity and respect between the sexes.”

Involving service users and encouraging participation

We all know that at times, service user participation can feel like a box-ticking exercise. And from the blank look on some women's faces when we ask them to complete questionnaires or comment on policies, it is hard sometimes not to think: "What exactly is the point of this?"

The point, however, is that more than 300 women use Eaves services every year, and without consultation the only time we will hear from them is through our complaints process or if there is a problem.

While we encourage this, we need to find out what they really think, whether they really are satisfied and what we can do to improve. It is a challenge that we have set ourselves to get as many of those 300 women talking to Eaves, about Eaves, as possible.

There are a number of ways that we can do this. In July we plan to carry out an organisation-wide questionnaire consultation with service users. We want to contact women by phone and in person to collect information, and the data will form the basis of a report on the consultation and Eaves' services. We will then use the report to focus on areas of our services that we need to change or improve.

We're looking forward to our 30th birthday summer party on 7 July, where women will be able to meet other staff at Eaves and put names to faces. We would also like to use this opportunity to encourage those women who do not usually speak out to participate in the consultation.

More details about the consultation will be available soon.

VACANCIES AT EAVES

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

London-based. Contract to end of March 2008. This post may be extended.

£23,994-£27,054 pro rata

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You will work a 28-hour week, supporting and advocating for children living in the refuge. Key duties include advising on issues such as child protection, parenting, education, health and children's rights.

Eaves offers 7% non-contributory pension, 30 days annual leave and a confidential counselling service for all employees.

To apply, please call 020 7840 7124, email recruitment@eaveshousing.co.uk or visit www.eaves4women.co.uk.

Closing date 28 June 2007. Interview dates to be confirmed.

This post is open to women only and is exempt under Section 7(2)(d) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. Successful applicants will be required to have a satisfactory disclosure through the Criminal Records Bureau. Eaves is committed to equality of opportunity and encourages applications from all sectors of the community.