

# TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT



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*Children trafficked to the Gulf states in the Middle East are forced to race camels for the entertainment of the elite. These children were training under the shadow of Dubai's skyline in early 2005.*



## THE FACTS ABOUT CHILD CAMEL JOCKEYS

The trafficking and exploitation of South Asian and African children as camel jockeys has burgeoned in the Gulf states, which, with the discovery of oil and the associated surge in wealth, transformed camel racing from a traditional Bedouin sports pastime to a multi-million dollar activity. Today, thousands of children, some as young as three or four years of age, are trafficked from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and countries in East Africa, and sold into slavery to serve as camel jockeys.

These children live in an oppressive environment and endure harsh living conditions. They work long hours in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit, live in unsanitary conditions, receive little food, and are deprived of sleep so that they do not gain weight and increase the load on the camels they race. They are trained and kept under the watchful eyes of handlers, who employ abusive control tactics, including threats and beatings. Some are reportedly abused sexually. Many have been seriously injured and some have been trampled to death by the camels. Those who survive the harsh conditions are disposed of once they reach their teenage years. Having gained no productive skills or education, scarred with physical and psychological trauma that can last a lifetime, these children face dim prospects. They often end up leading destitute lives. Trafficked child camel jockeys are robbed of their childhoods—and of their future.

another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Many nations misunderstand this definition, overlooking internal trafficking or forms of labor trafficking in their national legislation, and often failing to distinguish trafficking from illegal migration. Most often left out of interpretations of this definition is involuntary servitude, a form of trafficking that does not require movement. The TVPA defines “severe forms of trafficking,” as:

- a. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion,

or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or

- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

These definitions do not require that a trafficking victim be physically transported from one location to another.

### The Human and Social Costs of Trafficking

Victims of human trafficking pay a horrible price. Psychological and physical harm, including disease and stunted growth, often have permanent effects. In many cases the

exploitation of trafficking victims is progressive: a child trafficked into one form of labor may be further abused in another. Another brutal reality of the modern-day slave trade is that its victims are frequently bought and sold many times over—often sold initially by family members.

Victims forced into sex slavery can be subdued with drugs and subjected to extreme violence. Victims trafficked for sexual exploitation face physical and emotional damage from forced sexual activity, forced substance abuse, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Some victims suffer permanent damage to their reproductive organs. When the victim is trafficked to a location where he or she cannot speak or understand the language, this compounds the psychological damage caused from isolation and domination by traffickers.

*INDIA: Shadir, a boy of 15 years, was offered a job that included good clothes and an education; he accepted. Instead of being given a job, Shadir was sold to a slave trader who took him to a remote village in India to produce hand-woven carpets. He was frequently beaten. He worked 12 to 14 hours a day and he was poorly fed. One day, Shadir was rescued by a NGO working to combat slavery. It took several days for him to realize he was no longer enslaved. He returned to his village, was reunited with his mother, and resumed his schooling. Now Shadir warns fellow village children about the risks of becoming a child slave.*

### ***The Human Rights Dimension.***

Fundamentally, trafficking in persons violates the universal human right to life, liberty, and freedom from slavery in all its forms.

Trafficking of children violates the inherent right of a child to grow up in a protective environment and the right to be free from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

***Promoting Social Breakdown.*** The loss of family and community support networks makes trafficking victims vulnerable to traffickers' demands and threats, and contributes in several ways to the breakdown of social structures. Trafficking tears children from their parents and extended family. The profits from trafficking allow the practice to take root in a particular community, which is then repeatedly exploited as a ready source of victims. The danger of becoming a trafficking victim can lead vulnerable groups such as children and young women to go into hiding, with adverse effects on their schooling or family structure. The loss of education reduces victims' future economic opportunities and increases their vulnerability to being re-trafficked in the future. Victims who are able to return to their communities often find themselves stigmatized or ostracized. Recovery from the trauma, if it ever occurs, can take a lifetime.

***Fueling Organized Crime.*** The profits from human trafficking fuel other criminal activities. According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, human trafficking generates an estimated \$9.5 billion in annu-

*Esther Granados' son Abel, whose photo appears behind her, was killed by a ring of child traffickers that operated for 15 years in Mexico.*

