



#### FAQ 2: Smuggling and Trafficking Intersections

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Writer and Researcher: Rebecca Napier-Moore

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#### **Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women**

P.O. Box 36 Bangkok Noi Post Office

Bangkok 10700 Thailand Email: gaatw@gaatw.org Website: www.gaatw.org

# FAQ2: SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING INTERSECTIONS

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

#### WHAT ARE MIGRANT **SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING?**

A person's migration story can include both smuggling and trafficking, experienced at the same time or at different times.

Key definitions of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons are found in two Protocols to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC).

In the Protocol on Migrant Smuggling, smuggling is defined as:

"the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident."1

In the Trafficking Protocol, trafficking is defined as:

"the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."2

Smuggling as in the Protocol	Trafficking as in the Protocol		
Moving someone into a country they are not allowed to enter (irregularly)	Moving (or recruiting or harbouring) someone into or within a country, regularly or irregularly		
	With force, coercion, deception, abuse of power		
For financial or other benefit	For the purpose of exploitation		

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> These definitions may be slightly different from those adopted by States in national legislation.\*\*\*

Countries that ratify the Smuggling Protocol are required to criminalise migrant smuggling (though not migrants themselves), along with related actions such as producing, procuring or possessing a fraudulent travel or identity document, and enabling a non-national to illegally stay in a country, when these things are done for profit. Some countries include these elements in national definitions of smuggling.

In smuggling, the defining feature is helping another person irregulary enter a country, when this is done for profit. In trafficking, the defining feature is not so much whether or not a country's migration laws have been broken as the presence of exploitation. Of course, a person can start out as a smuggled migrant, only to find they have been moved into a situation that is inherently exploitative. However, this is not always the case (see Overlap section on page 9).

# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING?

Migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons are different legal concepts. However, they do overlap. According to the UN definitions, differences between the two include the following. (Note that national definitions may vary.):

- Smuggling involves moving someone across an international border for profit, while trafficking can occur within or across borders and is always for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>3</sup>
- The UN smuggling definition does not mention a migrant's consent. Concepts around force are however relevant in trafficking, where a person is moved against his or her will or deceitfully. (See section on Consent)
- In smuggling, the State's border has been violated by irregular border crossing, while in trafficking, a person is the victim of violations. Even though the State's border has been crossed irregularly in smuggling, under the Smuggling Protocol migrants in smuggling situations are not criminals.<sup>4</sup> However, States can charge people under domestic law for other offenses than having been smuggled.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to trafficked persons, migrants in smuggling situations are not necessarily victims of crime. They may have suffered no harm or injury in the migration process. However, like any other

migrant or indeed any other person, they can still become a victim of crime. Migrants can face a number of risks in the smuggling process, including theft, extortion, rape, assault and even death at the hands of smugglers. As noted above, some smuggling situations descend into becoming trafficking situations.

 Migrants in smuggling situations receive and are legally due very little assistance or access to remedies, while trafficked persons can usually access these more readily. Migrants in smuggling situations are often criminalised, facing arrest, detention and deportation.

#### WHEN DO SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING **OVERLAP?**

We all approached and paid a smuggler to get out of Burma, and sometimes it was the case that the person would lie to us and exploit us once in Thailand. In that case, you can be both smuggled and trafficked.

-Burmese woman at a MAP Foundation workshop. Chiang Mai, Thailand, March 2011

Smuggling and trafficking happen at the same time when a person's experience meets both definitions, ie. they are taken over an international border in an irregular and forced or deceptive way for profit and exploited.

Many migrants experience some aspects of the trafficking definition but not all. Perhaps they are moved and exploited but have not been forced. For adults their experience needs all three elements to create the offence of trafficking in persons under international law and under the law of many countries. Even though someone might have experienced something that is **nearly** trafficking. they are not considered in the same way; and they are held culpable for breaking immigration laws.

Though smuggling and trafficking can both happen in a person's migration experience, GAATW members and allies are also cautious, not wanting trafficking to be equated with smuggling in a way that causes denial of rights for trafficked persons, or vice versa. In a 2010 letter to the Malaysian Prime Minister, Human Rights Watch expressed concern about the addition of anti-smuggling elements in their anti-trafficking legislation, saying that the law leads to conflation of the two which risks trafficking victims being treated as smuggled migrants and subject to deportation<sup>6</sup> - a response that is unacceptable to non-trafficked migrants as well.7

#### HOW DO SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING INTERSECT IN TERMS OF CONSENT?

Many see a main divide between smuggling and trafficking as one of consent.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to what most people believe about smuggling, the Smuggling Protocol's definition does not mention consent. And highlighting consent in smuggling often only serves to criminalise or stigmatise migrants. Advocates can be astute in talking about smuggling in order not to further stereotypes - they do not have to ascribe consent to people in smuggling situations.

Excepting children, the Trafficking Protocol's definition of trafficking does require force or other deceptive or coercive means to be present. Most actors, including GAATW in past training material, say that smuggled people must have consented, some in order to highlight that trafficked people do not consent but are forced victims <sup>9</sup>

Cases from Burma show, however, that sometimes trafficked people do consent to exploitation when survival is at stake:

"The majority of trafficking victims in Burma were not kidnapped, but rather willingly consented to accompany traffickers [migration brokers], only to find out later that they had been deceived... In order to [support their families] many also consent to exploitative types of work. The line between trafficking and smuggling becomes increasingly blurry, as it is almost impossible to discern whether consent truly exists for those people who find themselves in dire economic situations."

In this example there is both consent and force present. People can consent initially and then find themselves exploited later; or they can consent though they may also feel forced to move out of a lack of other livelihood or safety options. The reality is blurry.

# HOW DO SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING INTERSECT IN PREVENTION?

Anti-smuggling measures rely heavily on blocking migration, which makes movement more dangerous for all migrants.

Not only do anti-smuggling measures harm trafficked people and all migrants, but some governments argue that their anti-smuggling measures are actually helping the anti-trafficking cause – **something we do not accept.** 

Their logic is that if people do not enter a destination country, then they cannot be exploited (and thus trafficked) there. <sup>11</sup> But the reality is that this leads to people taking more dangerous migration routes and being more dependent on and at risk of abuse by migration brokers.

For instance, in September 2009 French authorities destroyed a migrant camp in France, a temporary home to people hoping to reach the UK. The British Home Secretary said the *camp's destruction* would not only serve to "prevent illegal immigration, but also to stop people trafficking." As a result,

287 people were detained;<sup>13</sup> about 2000 migrants spread to other sites on the French coast; and the price of assisted migration doubled.<sup>14</sup>

**Prevention of movement can cause increased risks and dependencies.**Several studies show this:

- Netherlands 2006 study Increased crackdowns did not reduce the number of irregular entries, but increased involvement of smugglers.<sup>15</sup>
- US-Mexico 2004 12-year econometric study More enforcement resulted in migrants substituting routes to less patrolled areas, which meant an increase in time costs, health/ life costs and smugglers' fees.<sup>16</sup>
- Palestine-Israel 2008 40-year study As the border tightened in the last 10 years, numbers of migrants did not drop. "The scarcity of work and increasingly severe controls over clandestine workers entering Israel, made Palestinian labourers even more vulnerable in relation to smugglers."

Refugees and refugee advocates also find heightened restrictions (migration prevention) problematic because refugees must enter another country to find safety. If refugees are mislabelled as smuggled or trafficked people who need to be kept out, they will be blocked from finding safety.

# **HOW DO SMUGGLING** AND TRAFFICKING **INTERSECT IN IDENTIFICATION?**

When authorities detain migrants, they do not always screen for trafficking, but detain them as criminals, as 'smuggled', or as 'irregular' and then deport them before they have a chance to have their rights recognised.

It is often not possible to determine whether a situation is trafficking until the exploitation has actually occurred. For example, if people are found in a lorry, some about to suffocate to death and some having died already, 18 how does anyone know if they are they being smuggled or trafficked? Did the migrants themselves know if the facilitator arranging migration intended to exploit them at the end destination (equalling trafficking).

In both identification at borders and further into the migration process, handling trafficked persons is financially and administratively more burdensome for States than dealing with 'smuggled' people who can be deported. Therefore border authorities and immigration officials tend to identify people as smuggled rather than trafficked.19

On the other hand, there is a tendency for civil society groups to identify more people as 'trafficked' in order for them to obtain rights protections or assistance. It is hard for migrants to have their rights recognised but possibly hardest for people in smuggling or other undocumented situations who do not fall in protection categories.

"Smuggled people are often excluded from other protection determinations on the assumption that their motivations are purely economic, and their movement purely voluntary." 20

### HOW DO SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING INTERSECT IN TERMS OF VICTIMHOOD?

Trafficked people are legally defined as victims of a crime with rights to assistance, remedy and sometimes, though too rarely, visas to stay in the destination country, while smuggled people are more often legally defined as criminals to be arrested, detained and deported. This in turn influences the general public's attitude to smuggled or trafficked people. People think smuggling is exploitative and cruel when it ends in death, but not otherwise.<sup>21</sup>

While trafficking is renowned for including violations of sexual exploitation, debt bondage, robbery, torture, physical abuse and even death, these can and do occur in smuggling situations as well. Some national legislation and the Smuggling Protocol (Article 6,3) refers to some rights-violating actions (endangering life and inhuman treatment), as 'aggravating circumstances' prosecuted with heavier penalties than non-'aggravated' situations. While in

other laws, these 'aggravating' actions would translate into ascribing victimhood and then remedies, these are listed solely as a means by which to measure out longer sentences or harsher punishment to convicted smugglers.

We know that many people in smuggling situations *do experience violations*, but we do not want to victimise people by saying all smuggled migrants have experienced violations.

"Reducing migrants to the status of 'victims' will not necessarily represent their interests or assist them in their overall goal of improving their lives or the lives of their families. Nevertheless, the conditions in which they make these choices, their treatment on the way and in the country of destination is something unacceptable to modern standards of dignity and human treatment."<sup>22</sup>

When people in trafficking and smuggling situations are seen as victims, this can lead to a policy solution or other measures of stopping migration so that migrating people do not risk coming into contact with dangers. For example, anti-trafficking prevention programmes around the world have resulted increased border checks or bans on young women moving, as well as messages to school children and adults that migrating is dangerous, not to mention messages to women that they especially are likely end up sexually exploited and therefore should not leave their village. Advocates highlighting 'victimhood' in both smuggling and trafficking need to be careful that resultant policy responses do not lead to strict border control or protectionist prevention messaging as this also leads to human rights abuses.

### HOW DO SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING INTERSECT IN TERMS OF REMEDIES?

Civil society representatives, in some cases, are advocating for smuggled people to be able to claim compensation,<sup>23</sup> and there are a few attempts at setting a norm for smuggled people to be able to institute judicial proceedings for remedies.

Rights to assistance, justice and protection are commonly given at least in law to trafficked people but not smuggled people. One exception is in Belgium where smuggled people (who have experienced aggravated circumstances in smuggling, see Victimhood section) have access to the protection and assistance systems for victims of trafficking.<sup>24</sup>

Article 15 of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Model Law on Smuggling, for instance, says that smuggled people who have been victimized in the smuggling process should have access to the usual criminal remedies, as well as the right to institute judicial proceedings to claim compensation. Further, their immigration status or return home should not prevent them accessing the regular criminal justice system, or payment of compensation.<sup>25</sup>

A 2009 European Parliament directive includes similar rights to remedy, where employers and subcontractors alike are required to pay illegally-employed third-country nationals' outstanding remuneration.<sup>26</sup>

On the next page we show cases where trafficked people's access to remedies are affected positively and negatively by the smuggling framework - positively because they want to return home rather than go through antitrafficking systems; negatively because they want redress that would come from being labelled as trafficked, but instead are categorised as smuggled.

Some trafficked persons weigh whether the opportunity for redress is worth the potential social or economic consequences.<sup>27</sup> *Many trafficked people especially young women, who pass through Bangkok's migrant detention centre and are screened for trafficking, prefer not to say they are trafficked because they would have to stay in a closed government shelter for two years and assist with prosecution.* They would prefer to return home to either remain with family or migrate again, not wanting to forfeit freedom of movement or an income their family depends on.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, rather than wanting to be treated as 'smuggled', 'undocumented' or 'irregular', some trafficked people want to be given access to rights and redress that are due to people who have experienced trafficking. In the case study (next page), a woman cooperated in the legal proceedings to prosecute her trafficker and then later was told that she could not receive compensation for wages or exploitation because part of her story fit the smuggling definition. She wanted the remedy due to her as a trafficked person.

#### CASE STUDY: 'Trafficked' for the Purposes of Prosecution, 'Smuggled' for Compensation Assessment<sup>29</sup>

**Trafficked** - A. was trafficked from Thailand through Romania to the UK. She had a Thai passport with a Romanian visa for the first part of her journey and then a Malaysian passport with a UK visa, as one broker thought it would be easier to enter the UK as someone from a Commonwealth country. A. had lost her job and was worried that her husband would leave her if she did not find a well-paid one.

She sought work abroad and agreed on travel arrangements with a recruiter. The recruiter took her to a broker who arranged fake documents. She agreed to pay them 30,000 GBP or 1.6M THB for travel, visas and fees. The broker contacted a Dutch man (Jacob) to accompany A. to the UK. They stayed in Romania for a month and then travelled to Belgium and via train to the UK. In London, Jacob took A. to a flat where she waited for one hour, after which a brothel owner came to collect her.

The brothel owner told her that if she wanted to work at a massage parlour in the UK, she must have sex with the clients. She said no. The owner made a call to the broker in Thailand who told her that if she didn't work there, he would collect the loaned money from her parents. She was afraid and didn't want her parents to get in trouble or her husband to know about this, so she felt she had to work. She had 10 clients per day and could not say no to any clients or take sick leave. She believed that she could work off the debt and earn money, as she had seen other women do so.

Assistance with Trafficking Prosecution - The UK police Vice Unit rescued A. in February 2009 after four months at the brothel, and A. stayed at a shelter for one month. She delivered a statement in the UK, and returned to Thailand. In June 2009, she was requested to return to attend a court hearing. She contacted Foundation for Women (FFW) and travelled to the UK with a FFW staff person on 19 June 2009.

She delivered her statement on 24 June with aid of a special victim support centre at the court so that she did not have to face the defendant.

The police told her that when the defendant found out that the witness had come from Thailand, she changed her plea to guilty. When the trial finished, the prosecutor came to see A. thanking her and telling her that she was happy that A. was in the UK, as it led to the guilty plea. The trafficker was imprisoned. The next day the police asked her if she would speak to the media and a researcher, which she did.

Not Compensated Because 'Smuggled' - In July the UK police and head of the Vice Unit came to Thailand with the barrister who was taking care of criminal injury compensation. A. had completed a document for compensation as a victim of a crime after the court proceedings. The barrister and police went to the Romanian embassy to get A.'s visa application as a document for criminal compensation. When they saw this, however, they said it would be difficult to get criminal compensation, because a condition for it is that the person compensated should not be a part of any criminal activity. Because she had filled out the form herself, they said that this was evidence that she was involved with illegal smuggling rings, and party to the crime. She asked for her loss of earnings while working in the UK, but they said this was not possible telling her that the income from working, but engaged with a criminal act (prostitution), has to be confiscated by the authorities.

While we know clear cases of violations in which trafficked persons were not able to access remedies because they were labelled smuggled, far fewer opportunities exist for smuggled people to seek remedy. While assistance and compensation are rarely accessible through anti-smuggling measures specifically (though see EU and Belgian examples above), some smuggled people and migrant rights activists draw on forced labour, anti-slavery, or simply labour rights provisions to claim back pay.

# WHY DOES GAATW, AN **ANTI-TRAFFICKING** ORGANISATION, CARE **ABOUT SMUGGLING?**

On a daily basis GAATW members assisting trafficked persons see that restrictive legislation to prevent smuggling hurts the people they are working with in these ways:

- Through anti-smuggling measures, States are weakening rights protections gained for trafficked persons, refugees and other protected migrants.30
- Though sometimes well-meaning (in the name of protecting migrants from dangers in travel, or fighting crime), anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking measures can have the adverse effect of making migration more dangerous: brokers raise fees, take more precarious routes and put migrants in situations of increased vulnerability, dependency and debt.
- · Anti-smuggling measures can include indefinite detention, the towing of migrants' boats out of a safe country's waters, and criminalisation of all people who assist with the migration process and often migrants themselves.
- Arrest, detention and deportation take place so guickly that the result is the denial of access to justice for migrants including trafficked ones who experience abuses from both brokers and law enforcement.
- Arrest, detention and deportation of migrants, followed with media coverage of such events, perpetuate a perception of migrants as 'others', less deserving of dignity and rights.

#### **Endnotes**

- Article 4. Smuggling Protocol.
- It follows with "Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs." Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (hereafter Trafficking Protocol), 15 Nov 2000, General Assembly resolution 55/25.
- There is no internationally agreed definition of exploitation. See endnote 2 for what the Trafficking Protocol says about exploitation.
- Article 5. Smuggling Protocol. "Migrants shall not become liable to criminal prosecution under this Protocol for the fact of having been the object of conduct set forth in article 6 of this Protocol." Conduct in Article 6 includes smuggling as defined in Article 3; producing, procuring, providing, or possessing fraudulent documents; and enabling a person to remain in the country without proper documentation.
- Article 6(4). Smuggling Protocol. Article 6 (4) says that the state can take "measures against a person whose conduct constitutes an offence under its domestic law."
- Human Rights Watch (2010). Malaysia: Letter to the Prime Minister regarding amendments to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 8 Sept 2010.
- <sup>7</sup> States should be looking to alternatives to arrest, detention and deportation.
- 8 Bhabha, J. (2005), Migration Fundamentals: Trafficking, smuggling, and human rights. Migration Information Source. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute. Available at: http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=294.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2012). Migrant Smuggling FAQs. Available at: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/fags-migrantsmuggling.html#Role of consent. Also cited by Anti-Slavery Australia. FAQ. Sydney: Anti-Slavery Australia. Available at: http://www.antislavery.org.au/what-we-do/ fag.html.; International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Difference between Smuggling and Trafficking. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at: http://www.antitrafficking.net/differencebetweensmugglingand.html.; Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. (2011). Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Available at: http://www.international.gc.ca/ international/index.aspx?lang=eng&view=d.; Koser, K. (2001). The Smuggling of Refugees. In Kyle, D. and Koslowski, R. eds. Global Human Smuggling: Comparative Perspectives. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 257.; International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2004). Trafficking vs. Smuggling. Chisinau: IOM. Available at: http://www.iom.md/index.php/en/programs/105. For a history of the concept of free and forced migration related to consent, see McKeown, A. (2008).

- Melancholy Order: Asian migration and the globalisation of borders. New York: Colombia University Press.
- GAATW (2006-2010). What is Trafficking? Training presentation. Bangkok: GAATW. See also ibid.
- Emphasis added. National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) (2008), Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008, p. 266, Available at: http:// www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/HRDU\_YB-2008/pdf/trafficking.pdf.
- This is not taking into account that trafficking internal to a single country also happens, but stakeholders give more attention to cross-border trafficking.
- UK 'won't take Calais migrants'. BBC News, 22 Sept 2009.
- French Police Clear the 'Jungle' Migrant Camp in Calais. Guardian online, 22 Sept 2009.
- Calais jungle raids escalated to unprecedented levels. Migrant 2 Migrant Radio, 8 Dec 2009.
- Van Liempt, I. and Doomemik, J. (2006). Migrant's Agency in the Smuggling Process. International Migration, 44, 4, pp. 165-190.
- Gathman, C. (2004). The Effects of Enforcement on Illegal Markets: Evidence from migrant smuggling along the southwestern border. IZA Discussion Paper No. 1004.
- Parizot, C. (2008). Tightening closure, securing disorder: Israeli closure policies and informal border economy during the second Intifada (2000-2006). Refugee Watch, 31. p. 65.
- See for instance the 2008 case of Burmese migrants travelling in the back of a lorry in Thailand. 54 died and 66 survived. Initially authorities questioned how to identify the survivors. See 39 collated news articles at Mekong Migration Network. Archive for the Death by Suffocation of 54 Burmese Migrants, Available at: http:// www.mekongmigration.org/?cat=10.
- Conversation with GAATW member organisation working with authorities on immigration processing, December 2011. See also Gallagher, A. (2001). Human Rights and the New UN Protocols on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling: A Preliminary Analysis. Human Rights Quarterly. 23. p. 1000.
- Oberoi, P. (2011). Myths and misperceptions: Anti-smuggling measures and the human rights framework. Paper presented at GAATW-OHCHR Smuggling Roundtable. 20-22 June 2011, p. 2.
- 21 Kyle, D. and Dale, J. (2001). Smuggling the State Back In: Agents of human smuggling reconsidered. In Kyle, D. and Koslowski, R. eds. Global Human Smuggling:

- Comparative Perspectives. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 32.
- Taylor-Nicholson, E. (2011). The Migrant Smuggling Protocol and Human Rights Protections. Paper presented at GAATW-OHCHR Smuggling Roundtable, 20-22 June 2011, pp. 2-3.
- ATKI Hong Kong. Conversation with GAATW, Feb 2011. For information of a campaign for compensation for trafficked people see COMP.ACT European Action for Compensation for Trafficked Persons, www.compactproject.org.
- <sup>24</sup> Kingdom of Belgium, (no date) The fight against trafficking and smuggling in human beings: Policy and approach, booklet available from the Belgian Ministry of Justice, accessed May 2011. See also commentary in UNODC (2010). Model Law against the Smuggling of Migrants. New York: UNODC.
- <sup>25</sup> UNODC (2010). *Ibid*.
- Articles 6 and 8, Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009, Providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals. See also para 24 on residence permits conditional on assisting with the trial.
- Self-Empowerment Program for Migrant Women (SEPOM) (2010). 'Trafficked' Identities as a Barrier to Community Reintegration: Five Stories of Women Rebuilding Lives and Resisting Categorisation. GAATW Feminist Participatory Action Research Series. Bangkok: GAATW. Available at: http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=651%3Athe-realities-andagency-of-informal-sector-workers-the-account-of-migrant-women-workers-in-nairobi&catid=164%3Afpar-series&Itemid=73.
- Discussion with assistance providers during GAATW visit to Bangkok Detention Center, 27 April 2009.
- 29 Case from Foundation for Women.
- By for instance violating principles of non-refoulement when deporting migrants or pushing boats back to sea; by prioritizing detention and deportation before screening for vulnerabilities or special victim categories; by not allowing asylum claims.





**Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women** 

P.O. Box 36 Bangkok Noi Post Office Bangkok 10700 Thailand

Tel: +66-2-8641427/28 Fax: +66-2-864-1637 E-mail: gaatw@gaatw.org Website: www.gaatw.org