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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sub-Commission on the Promotion  
and Protection of Human Rights  
Fifty-sixth session  
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

**SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES – CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY**

**Written statement\* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2<sup>nd</sup> July 2004]

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\*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

**Contemporary forms of Slavery: Trafficking in Women and Children in Eastern Europe**

Slavery was the first human rights issue to arouse wide international concern. Yet, in the face of universal condemnation, slavery-like practices remain a grave and growing problem even today. Human trafficking is a global problem. The UN Secretary-General has indicated in his message to the International Summit on Human Trafficking, Child Abuse, Labor and Slavery (Abuja, August 2002), "trafficking in persons is fuelled by poverty, unemployment and disruption of traditional livelihoods, as well as by economic disparities among countries and between women and men. It has become the fastest-growing business of organized crime, and many drug traffickers have switched to it because it is more lucrative and relatively risk-free."

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime has now been signed by over 100 States. All States must continue working for universal ratification and the full implementation of all articles of the Protocol.

Society for Threatened Peoples is very concerned about trafficking in vulnerable groups such as members of ethnic and religious minorities and refugee women and children. For instance Society for Threatened Peoples would like to draw the Sub Commissions attention to the fact that in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Balkans and Central Asia. There the increase in demand and supply for trafficking has lead the growth of the trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation. Society for Threatened Peoples fears that after the EU Enlargement even more women and girls are potential victims of the crime of contemporary slavery in the form of forced prostitution. Even in 1995, it was estimated that the money generated by the informal and illegal economy accounted for 50% of the gross national product, furthermore unemployment affects women, constituting 64% of the total unemployed. It is estimated that annually 7 Million Dollars are made in profits of human trafficking alone in Europe. 500.000 women and girls are illegally forced into Europe every year.

Since 1999 Society for Threatened Peoples monitors the situation of minorities like Roma, Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptians in Kosovo. Members of the organisation's team report about a very worrying development. They collected information about the fact that Kosovo Albanian police are "detaining" young Roma women they find alone and take them to jail for "fun". Women cannot speak about what happens to them openly. Nevertheless we will quote from one interview with a 20 year old Roma woman from the village of Obilich: "A few weeks ago I went to Plementia to pick up my father. There were two policemen, two young Albanian men, who stopped me. I did not know what was wrong because I don't speak Albanian. They were telling me something but I did not understand them. I was talking with them in Serbian but one of them just slapped my face. I pleaded with them to let me go but they did not want to. They took me to the police station in Obilich and beat me all night long. I'm sorry I can't finish my story because I am feeling sick every time I remember that nights. It's a miracle I am still alive. The next morning the police let me go home. They did not do anything bad to me but they wanted to do many things but I fought them. I was not alone, there was also another girl in the room with me that they had arrested before me. Now all Albanians, especially the police are looking for beautiful girls." Society for Threatened Peoples is very worried about reports like this one and would like to ask the Sub-Commission

Society for Threatened Peoples would like to ask the Sub-Commission

- To thoroughly investigate in the allegations against police in Kosovo and take adequate steps to bring the perpetrators to justice and prevent such crimes from being committed in the future.
- To urge States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children
- To develop special programmes addressed to the vulnerable groups of victims from ethnic and religious minorities and refugee populations
- To call upon governments to criminalize trafficking in human beings in all its forms and to condemn and penalize traffickers and intermediaries, while ensuring protection and assistance to the victims of trafficking with full respect for their human rights and not contingent on their cooperation with the prosecution of their exploiters.

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