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CHILD SEX TOURISM

Child sex tourism is the commercial sexual exploitation of children by people who travel from one location to another and there engage in sexual acts with minors. Often, they travel from a richer country to one that is less developed.

Child sex tourists come from all walks of life: they may be married or single, male or female, wealthy tourists or budget travellers. Some child sex tourists (preferential abusers and pedophiles) target children specifically, however, most are situational abusers, who do not usually have a sexual preference for children, but take advantage of a situation in which a child is made available to them.

Anonymity, availability of children, and being away from the moral and social constraints that normally govern behaviour, can lead to abusive conduct in another country. Child sex exploiters may try to rationalize their actions by claiming that sex with a child is culturally acceptable in the place they are visiting or that money or goods exchanged benefit the child and community.

Destinations can change, and as prevention and protection efforts are stepped up in one country, child sex tourists may choose another country as their destination. For instance, as countries such as Brazil and Thailand increase their vigilance, child sex tourism is rising in others, such as Ecuador, Cambodia and Indonesia. The opening up of transportation routes and markets, unregulated mass tourism development, and accentuated wealth discrepancies can all cause child sex tourism destinations to shift from one country to another. In this way, North and South Eastern Europe, as well as Central America have experienced a growth in child sex tourism.

Tourism is not the cause of child sexual exploitation, but child sex exploiters make use of the facilities offered by tour companies, hotels, resorts, restaurants, airlines and other transportation companies.

Some businesses may be involved, for example, a hotel that turns a blind eye to exploitation on its premises or travel agents that knowingly arrange sex tours abroad. Sex tourism preys on sexual inequality and contributes to the demand for trafficking for sexual exploitation, which entraps children.

The tourism industry is an important player and a valuable ally in the protection of children from sexual exploitation in tourism. Many national travel and tourism organizations have recognized this danger to children and are working together to take action against people who sexually exploit children in tourism.

Source: www.ecpat.net

October 2007