CHILD SEX TOURISM - THE GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT ON CANADA

Will Canada’s Child Sex Tourism Legislation Survive a Constitutional Challenge?

The Third World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children will be held in Brazil in 2008. The Canadian justice system will be in the global spotlight due to four cases which activists for children the world over are monitoring.

Kenneth Klassen - A 56-year-old Burnaby British Columbia man faces 35 charges under federal child sex tourism laws. Klassen’s charges include sexual interference, sexual touching, procuring and making child pornography. It is alleged the 35 offences were committed in Cambodia, Colombia and the Philippines between 1998 and 2002. Klassen has launched a constitutional challenge to Canada’s child sex tourism legislation slated for July 2008. Members of the Beyond Borders legal team will intervene to save the legislation.

Christopher Neil - Neil, from British Columbia, was arrested in October 2007 in Thailand ending an intensive international manhunt. Neil abruptly left his teaching job in South Korea and flew to Thailand after Interpol digitally unscrambled 200 images of a pedophilia suspect sexually abusing Asian children. After those images aired, police say three Thai youths came forward alleging they were paid to perform oral sex. At the time, the boys were 9, 13 and 14. Neil’s family is asking Canadian officials to bring Neil home to face charges in Canada. Beyond Borders disagrees.

Ernest Fenwick MacIntosh - After years and years of Canadian government fumbling and disinterest, accused child sexual abuser, Ernest Fenwick MacIntosh was extradited from India in June 2007 to stand trial in Canada in connection with 43 charges of indecent assault involving 8 boys under 14 at the time. The charges go back to the 1970s in Nova Scotia, Canada. MacIntosh’s Canadian victims have suffered years of frustration as incredibly, while MacIntosh’s extradition file languished on the desks of federal justice officials and Nova Scotia prosecutions, the Canadian government was renewing his passport so he could stay abroad. Presently two boys in India are claiming he took them to hotels and abused them. His trial on the Canadian charges begins in December.

Orville Frank Mader - In October 2007 an arrest warrant was issued by Thai police in the case of Orville Frank Mader. Mader faces allegations he participated in the abuse of an eight-year-old Thai boy who was kidnapped from a shopping mall. Thai police are investigating allegations he may have abused at least three other boys. Mader had been teaching English overseas at various places in southeast Asia. In a strategic move, Mader fled home to Canada. He was arrested on an immigration warrant and granted bail in Canada posting a $1000.00 surety. Although Thai authorities are making conflicting statements regarding the extradition of Mader back to Thailand, it is Beyond Borders view that he should be sent back to face the allegations in the country where the alleged child victim(s)live.
“Hooker”, “teen prostitute”, “sex trade worker”. These are some of the terms we see in the media and hear on the street that refer to children as young as 12 years old. What comes to mind when you read and hear these terms? Do they conjure images of a young person who is being sexually victimized or of a “bad girl” who is out of control and running wild, ruining her life on purpose?

I don’t think anyone can argue that the above terms don’t carry a negative connotation that also imply a degree of choice in the activity. Why do we describe children sexually exploited by an adult using these terms?

We need to change the language we use around this issue when it comes to minors. The negative terms we presently hear in the media and elsewhere are inaccurate and ultimately work against trying to solve the problem of child sexual exploitation.

For the past four years I have chaired a group called MAISEY—Media Awareness Initiative about Sexually Exploited Youth. MAISEY’s mandate is to act as a resource to the media in their coverage of stories involving child sexual exploitation. The group also acts as a kind of watchdog when it comes to how the media portrays the issue. MAISEY comprises representatives of several organizations working at a policy level or directly with adolescents who have been sexually exploited. The group’s focus is solely on children and youth.

Critics of MAISEY have accused the group of arguing over semantics that really don’t have a negative result. Those of us working with youth who are healing from sexual exploitation are keenly aware of the effect these terms have on them. Working through their deep level of shame and self-loathing requires them to be able to redefine what happened to them as abuse rather than it being their fault. No matter the behaviour on the part of the young person, it is wrong for an adult to have sex with a child.

We also know that sexual abuse offenders rationalize their deviant sexual fantasies and actions by telling themselves that their victims either deserve what they get or in reality wanted it to happen. These thoughts are part of what enables them to continue to offend. By using more accurate terms to describe sexual abuse we avoid reinforcing the offender’s errors in thinking. Sadly, there are many ways to sexually abuse a child. There is intra-familial sexual abuse, rape, Internet luring, child abuse images posted on the Web, child sex tourism as well as sexual exploitation on the street, within gangs and inside of private homes. Interestingly, only sexual abuse via a stranger exchanging food, shelter or money for sex with a minor is described pejoratively using the terms noted above.

MAISEY’s focus is on the media because it is a conduit to our community. We believe that media content both reflects and shapes our perceptions and attitudes about the world around us. Many members of the media have done exceptional print and broadcast stories that manage to raise the public’s awareness of the very complex, psychological, environmental and societal components of this massive human tragedy that destroys many young lives.

We need to do more, however, to ensure that children who have been sexually victimized are not re-victimized in the media. We need to guard against subtly, and sometimes overtly, blaming the child for his/her own abuse. Let’s stop coverage that emphasizes the “lifestyle” of the young person without providing the context that has placed them in harm’s way. When there isn’t the air time or page space necessary to do this, using terms such as “child sexual exploitation” rather than “child prostitution” can provide some context while meeting the often overriding need for brevity.

Is a change in language going to eradicate the sexual abuse of children through prostitution? No. The issue is complex and as a society we are far from placing a priority on the antecedents of abuse such as violence, poverty, addiction, mental health issues and incest, for example. However, perhaps a change in language will make it more difficult for us to discard the victim and the issue.

The bottom line is that the old terms aren’t appropriate/accurate when referring to children. Would we accept labeling someone with a developmental delay or handicap as being a “moron” or “retarded”? At one time these terms were perfectly acceptable. Did changing these terms make a difference with respect to the integration of affected individuals into full community life? I believe it did play a part in our changing perception and was also a reflection of our changing perspective.

Language has evolved alongside our developing awareness and knowledge of the problem of adults having sex with minors. Paying a child for sex is just one of the ways an adult achieves sexual gratification from children. The crime itself is sexual abuse. Those of us working to eliminate the sexual exploitation of children will continue to foster that evolution by using language that fits. Shouldn’t everyone?

By Deborah Zanke

Language has evolved alongside our developing awareness and knowledge of the problem of adults having sex with minors. Paying a child for sex is just one of the ways an adult achieves sexual gratification from children. The crime itself is sexual abuse. Those of us working to eliminate the sexual exploitation of children will continue to foster that evolution by using language that fits. Shouldn’t everyone?

-Deborah Zanke, Chair, Media Awareness Initiative about Sexually Exploited Youth and Beyond Borders Member responsible for Media Awards. Beyond Borders is a member of MAISEY.
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Incursion Voyages:
1st Canadian Signatory of The Code Of Conduct

Media representatives attended the first Canadian signature of the The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Commercial Exploitation in Travel and Tourism by the travel agency Incursion Voyages from Quebec City.

The event took place during the 19th edition of Montreal’s International Tourism and Travel Show, held in Montreal on October 26, 2007.

The Code is an initiative of ECPAT International, UNICEF and the World Tourism Organization, and is locally promoted by Beyond Borders, the Canadian affiliate of ECPAT.

M. Jean-Pierre Caron, president of Incursion Voyages, and Rosalind Prober, president of Beyond Borders and board member of ECPAT International, signed this agreement before representatives of the Canadian Association of Travel Agencies (ACTA), the Association of National Tourist Office Representatives (ANTOR), as well as Mr. Jean Provencher, CEO of the International Tourism and Travel Show (ITTS).

Sexual exploitation of children in tourism: a plague that concerns us all

Over 600 companies around the world have already signed the Code since its launch in 2004, but Incursion Voyages, recently named « Travel agency of the year in Canada 2007 » by ACTA, was the first Canadian company to adopt it. Canada is directly involved in this problem, as shown by the recent arrest of the presumed pedophile Christopher Neil in Thailand.

To know more about the Code of Conduct, refer to the World Tourism Organization website at www.thecode.org.

Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Issues and Implications

Human trafficking of girls and young women into the sex trade is a growing issue worldwide. From a global perspective, sex trafficking of women and girls is seen more as an international incident and not as readily common in Canada. Canada is seen as a destination country for sex trafficked girls and women rather than seen as a country where sex trafficking originates.

In Canada where more than 500 (maybe more) Aboriginal girls and women are missing, domestic trafficking as an issue for this population has not received the attention it deserves. Instead of being contextualized in a human trafficking framework, the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls is portrayed and understood as a problem of prostitution or sex work.

A recently published article in the First Peoples Child & Family Review journal by Anupriya’ Sethi, raises conscientiousness around the issue of sexually exploited Aboriginal girls in Canada as identified by the organizations and agencies working to help them. (Sethi considered it inappropriate, unethical and impractical to interview sexually exploited girls without the fear of further exploiting them).

Sethi’s article contextualizes Aboriginal girls’ experiences within the trafficking framework with the purpose of distinguishing sexual exploitation from sex work. The author provides a definition of trafficking and examines in detail the scope of the problem, patterns and recruitment of girls to the sex trade along with the root causes that make Aboriginal girls more susceptible to sex trafficking.

Her article ends with a number of recommendations for policy, research and further analyses. This excellent article can be read online at the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society’s online journal, at: http://www.fncaringsociety.org/pubs/vol3num3/Sethi_57.pdf.

An article review by Marlyn Bennett, Coordinating Editor of the First Peoples Child & Family Review online journal [Volume 3, Number 3, 2007, pp.57-71].

Internet Café Franchise in Joint Venture with ECPAT Philippines

Everything Online, Inc. (EOL), a business franchising system in the information and communications technology industry, sealed its joint venture with ECPAT Philippines in an effort to heighten awareness on the issue of child pornography on the Internet and elsewhere. ECPAT Philippines also launched the ECPAT I-Café Plus, an Internet café, as part of the Make-IT-Safe Campaign of ECPAT Philippines.

The Make-IT-Safe Campaign of ECPAT Philippines aims to gear everyone in making information technology safe for children and young people wherever they are.

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By Liz Crawford

The inner workings of the fashion industry for most of us is something we either read about in the tabloids or watch on T.V. Although its impact on children and youth is dramatic, this industry remains a foreign world yet entertaining with its scandal over the top fashion designers and waif like young models. What most people do not realize is that at the heart of all of it is a 14-year-old girl.

Although they are most often in appearance women, most of the world top models are under the age of 18. The majority of top model agencies are looking to start a model between the ages of 13 to 16. Child Star Dakota Fanning is the new face of Marc Jacobs. Journalist Yuki Hayashi explained Marc Jacob’s choice in the April issue of Chatelaine magazine saying “Now he joins the ranks of the many designers who set their sites younger. Way younger. As any successful man will tell you, sometimes you’ve gotta trade up by ageing down.”

With our youth obsessed society, huge profits are now made on the backs of very vulnerable young girls. They are also being exported around the globe everyday.

A part of developing a model is to teach her how to exude confidence, sensuality and poise. Modeling nude or topless is now part of the job. Model scouts and agents move quickly to prepare her for the camera and what is believed by most to be the most glamorous job in the world. Then to develop a model’s career, the teenager must leave home and work abroad to develop her portfolio. In 4 inch heels and looking as though she just stepped off the cover of vogue, this 14-year-old girl finds herself working alone and isolated in countries anywhere in the world. Sometimes her roommate is another 14-year-old girl from a poor Third World Country. Often her roommate is too busy supplementing her model income working in the bar as a dancer. After all what was she to do? We teach them to be sexy, make them over to look like women, then send them out in the world to find work in a highly competitive market. They are most definitely sought after, sometimes by magazines other times by the guys from the night clubs that are anxious to get the new girls’ names as fast as possible. Do we expect a 14-year-old girl to make the right decision? Can we assume she will stand up to the pressures of not only the industry but the people in it? Is that not a lot to ask from a child who would otherwise be at home and going to the mall with friends?

I have been in the fashion industry for over 20 years. I have witnessed the abuse of power, the vulnerability of young models and seen first hand the dangers that exist in this industry. The sexualization of children is not only seen as acceptable as profits role in but, as well, necessary for success.

I, like many child models, was photographed topless at 15 years old, in the name of fashion. I am extremely concerned by the overwhelming amount of teenage girls being exported today. I am appalled by the lack of regulations that are in place for model agencies and photographers. I am not at all surprised that so many organized crime groups use model agencies as a cover to recruit and traffick young girls into the sex trade. It is the perfect cover and vehicle to reach young, pretty hopefuls.

The fashion industry needs to be regulated. Agents, scouts and photographers should require a place of business and a license. There should be age restrictions for traveling models. Italy and France have made progress in this area. There needs to be a level of awareness about the industry, as hundreds of thousands of teenage girls try to enter this industry annually.

I am thrilled that Beyond Borders is now focusing on this issue. I have watched as ECPAT has taken on the most difficult issues including the Internet technology industry and the sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism industry as well.

Focusing on the sexualization of children and the gross violations of the rights of children to be protected from sexual exploitation in the global child modeling industry is long overdue. We need to protect our children from what has become a playground for predators.

Liz Crawford lives in Winnipeg Manitoba where she owns a modeling company. Liz has become a well respected activist for regulation of the modeling industry. Beyond Borders is pleased to welcome Liz to the ECPAT movement.

Manitoba Announces Consultations to Better Regulate Modeling Agencies

Manitoba announced on November 21, 2007, that it will consult stakeholders on changes to the Employment Services Act to better regulate modeling agencies. The goals of the legislation would include ensuring young people, especially young women and girls, are adequately protected from potential exploitation.

The minister said this will be the first such legislation in its kind in Canada and will be a model for other jurisdictions.
Beyond Borders announced its 2007 media awards winners at the Park Theatre in Winnipeg on November 20, Universal Children’s Day.

Meredith Ralston, of Mount Saint Vincent University, received the award in the broadcast category for her riveting documentary, Selling Sex in Heaven, which aired on CBC Newsworld’s The Lens in January 2007.

The film examines the lucrative and demeaning sex tourism industry in the Philippines. Seen through the eyes of two idealistic female students and a male university professor, the film depicts a young bar girl and the people who befriend her. The poverty and squalor she lives in and her hope that one day a foreigner will rescue her is both poignant and heartbreaking. Actor Kiefer Sutherland narrates the film.

Mark Bonokoski received the award in the print category for an article entitled, The Master Seducer, which was published in Maclean’s magazine in May 2007.

The article reveals the background to the criminal trial of convicted pedophile, John Inglis, a former teacher at a private school in Toronto who received a sentence of house arrest for his guilty plea. It provides compelling insight into the complex dynamics of sexual abuse and the profound and enduring destructive effects upon its victims.

Beyond Borders is very pleased with the caliber of the nominations this year and congratulates Dr. Ralston and Mr. Bonokoski for their exceptional journalism. Their work helps Beyond Borders to protect kids by raising public awareness about the issues related to child sexual exploitation.

The event was Beyond Borders’ first public Media Awards Ceremony. Beyond Borders’ fifth annual Media Awards was extra special this year as it is our 10th anniversary as a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization.

A special thanks goes to the exemplary judges who chose our esteemed winners, Ms. Leah Janzen, senior communications manager at the University of Manitoba, Mr. Jocelyn Laberge, member of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, and lecturer at université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM), and Dr. Mary Lynn Young, acting director and an associate professor at the University of British Columbia graduate School of Journalism.

For more information on Media Awards go to www.beyondborders.org

Beyond Borders Hosts Two Events in Winnipeg November 19, 2007

Beyond Borders held its first public Annual General Meeting on November 19, 2007. After the meeting and refreshments, a full house of attendees were regaled with an enlightening, though disturbing presentation by renowned author, and investigative journalist, Julien Sher. Mr. Sher has recently published his latest book entitled One Child at a Time: The Global Fight to Rescue Children from Online Predators.

Julien Sher provided some thought provoking statistics on the issue of online predators luring children, and left all those who have children with the message to be very aware of their children’s activities on the Internet, and for us all to realize that these predators could be the guy next door.

In the afternoon of November 19, 2007 Beyond Borders held a youth event at the University of Winnipeg. A panel, moderated by Norman Boudreau, discussed Protecting Our Children Online.

Panelists included the Honourable Gordon Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services and Housing, Lianna McDonald, Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Inspector Alan Scott, Winnipeg Police Services and author and journalist Julian Sher.

Beyond Borders thanks all the participants for their participation and lively discussions.

No Red Report Abuse Button in Sight for Canadian Children - Why?

In August 2006, Microsoft announced it would feature a distinctive red “report abuse” button on its instant chat programs in the United Kingdom. With 11.3 million registered users, Microsoft’s software - popularly known as MSN Messenger but soon to be re-branded as Windows Live Messenger - is the largest instant messenger service in the U.K. Young people chatting online who suddenly feel they are being exposed to suspicious behavior or inappropriate sexual advances can make a report to police with a single click of a mouse.
Fighting Online Child Pornography:
Why Mandatory Blocking by ISPs is Needed

By Gordon Keast

Under the Criminal Code of Canada it’s illegal to access child sexual abuse images through the Internet. So why is it taking so long for all internet service providers (ISPs) in this country to begin blocking child pornography?

Last November, eight of Canada’s largest ISPs, together with Cybertip.ca, a national child-exploitation tip line, announced the launch of Project Cleanfeed Canada. It’s a voluntary program and ISPs don’t have to take part.

Based on a similar project started by British Telecom three years ago, Cleanfeed Canada is designed to make the Internet safer for everyday Canadians and their kids. It does so by blocking “accidental” access to known foreign websites containing child sex abuse images as they are reported and confirmed.

Unfortunately, there are approximately 400 ISPs in Canada. And while many of the bigger ones, like the major telcos, do have Cleanfeed filters in place, the vast majority does not.

Most of the smaller ISPs that buy bulk broadband services and blocks of IP addresses from larger companies have to install filters on their own. At present, fewer than 5% of the total number of ISPs in Canada are using Cleanfeed filters. Even one of the large telecommunications companies, an original participant in the Cleanfeed Canada announcement last fall, did not have its filters in place as of the end of June this year.

Cleanfeed Canada currently blocks over 800 child sexual abuse sites. All of these sites are included in a blacklist that is distributed in encrypted form to participating ISPs. Only sites displaying images of prepubescent children being assaulted or posed deliberately in a sexualized manner are included in the list.

Since 2005, there has been a horrific four-fold increase in images depicting the most severe abuse, such as penetrative and sadistic sexual activity, according to the Internet Watch Foundation. Nearly 60 per cent of commercial child abuse websites sell child rape images. Over 80% of the websites are linked to the US or Russia.

In the UK, the government is committed to ensuring that websites with child abuse content cannot be accessed from within the country through any Internet service provider. They have set a target for every ISP to support blocking by the end of 2007. The Canadian government should be doing the same.

Given the urgency of the problem and the severity of the child abuse images occurring online, you would expect more action and co-operation between all concerned here in Canada.

Whatever the reason, it seems a voluntary system is not enough. Fighting online child sex abuse and exploitation is too serious to be voluntary. Nothing less than 100% compliance is acceptable.

Mandatory filtering and blocking of child sexual abuse images by all ISPs and wireless companies should be legislated and the technological tools for getting the job done should now be required or provided to every ISP operating in Canada.

Gordon Keast is a Canadian journalist and communications consultant, living in Surrey, BC.

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Every Keystroke Has a Consequence

On November 17, 2007, members of the Toronto Police Force’s Child Exploitation Section of the Sex Crimes Unit and members of the Community Mobilization Unit launched the “Every Keystroke Has a Consequence” internet safety campaign at the 11th Annual Community Police Consultative Conference.

Chief Bill Blair and Toronto Police Services Board Chair Alok Mukherjee were joined by Signy Arnason, director of Cybertip.ca, cast members of the “We Will Rock You” musical, corporate sponsors including Microsoft Canada, and teens who participated in the production of the campaign.

Beyond Borders sits on the advisory board of CYBERTIP and is a founder of the hotline, Cybertip.ca.
Excerpts from Rosalind Prober's Address to The Canadian Criminal Justice Association

Why do I say that we are lucky to even have a sex offender registry in Canada? I appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in July 2003. The message the Justice Committee heard from researchers was that recidivism is so low by convicted sex offenders that registering them in any way is a useless tool. Of course, the statistics used to back up this claim are based on those reconvicted of child sexual abuse and those in the criminal justice statistics. The fact that victimization statistics clearly show that the vast number of sexually abused kids never appear in any justice statistics because they do not report these crimes to police, never seems to dawn on those researchers who constantly claim that bank robbers have higher recidivism rates than child sexual abusers. Researchers, however, like Doctor Langevin in a recent longitudinal study not based on criminal justice statistics proved that recidivism among convicted sex offenders was exceptionally high and in some cases over 60%.

There are three main reasons why Beyond Borders feels the sex offender registry is in many ways just smoke and mirrors designed to be very abuser friendly and inadequate.

First, it is not retroactive. Police investigating child abductions and sexual abuse crimes find they have a half baked tool with the vast number of those who have chosen to molest children in Canada not on it. Those who commit child sex tourism and return to Canada are not on it either. A sex offender registry is a way for police to rule out individuals who are most likely to have committed sexual crimes as they have a history of doing it. The best indicator of future behavior is past behavior.

Secondly the sex offender registry is only accessible by law enforcement on occasions when they believe that a sexual crime is in progress….This is not the way to protect children. Of course, a flawed inadequate law or a flawed sex offender registry never means much to those involved in the drafting because nobody believes their child will be abused, abducted or killed.

The third loophole, one which is admittedly more controversial, is the fact that the sex offender registry is not open to the public or foreign governments.

Should it be the right of children and their caregivers to know that a person has had a criminal record for abusing the ultra vulnerable or in extreme cases a long history of pedophilia? We believe the answer lies in the Convention of the Rights of the Child where Canada committed in Article 34 to do everything in its power to prevent child sexual abuse. The answer is yes. In Canada regularly violent and predatory convicted child sexual abusers are released in the community with absolute anonymity and freedom to move from province to province….The minimal harm that may be created to a sex offender’s right to privacy and anonymity by allowing the public in some fashion to view the registry is far outweighed by the need to protect our children.

Child sexual abuse is a crime that tragically is very easy to commit as children are usually abused by those they know and have learned to trust. It feeds off inequality and abuse of power. We now must level that playing field between convicted abusers and their targeted children. We can no longer just cross our fingers when releasing high risk obsessive child abusers. Anonymity is a convicted abuser’s best friend and enabling ally. It is in the best interest of children that convicted sex offenders be no longer anonymous on the sex offender registry.

For the complete speech go to www.beyondborders.org and click on Legal Action.

Excerpts from an Article in Bangkok Post by Michael Casey, Associated Press

Last year, suspected pedophile John Mark Karr was caught in Thailand. This week, Canadian Christopher Paul Neil slipped into the country in a bid to elude police over allegations that he abused at least a dozen young boys in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

“Everything here makes the crime easy,” said Rosalind Prober, president of the Canadian children’s rights organization Beyond Borders, who is visiting Bangkok. “This can be an open crime in Thailand when Western men are obviously in front of people carrying on in this way. It becomes normalized so they don’t think they are doing anything wrong.”

Teaching English is especially popular because jobs are easy to get and the position carries with it a level of authority that makes it difficult for the children and even their parents to question abuses.

“The children are sitting ducks. This is their teacher. This is someone you trust and tells you what to do,” Ms. Prober said. “You very quickly get trapped. There is such a level of control and power by a teacher. It’s multiplied when it comes to a foreign teacher.”

Excerpt from Bangkok Post, October 19, 2007
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Child Sex Network Smashed - Abusing Children with Promises of Modeling Careers

In November, 2007, police and prosecutors across Europe arrested 92 suspects allegedly linked to a network that produced child abuse videos and sold them to 2500 customers around the world. The videos, ranging from girls in provocative poses to a father abusing his young daughters, were sold to clients in 19 countries, including teachers, doctors, lawyers and computer experts. The 23 victims, ages 9-16, were mainly Ukrainian girls duped into performing sex acts with promises of lucrative modelling careers.

COMING UP:
JOIN BEYOND BORDERS IN SUPPORTING
SAFER INTERNET DAY FEBRUARY 12, 2008 WORLDWIDE

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