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## 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

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### THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary legislative system. Executive authority is exercised by the Prime Minister and Cabinet representing the governing political parties (traditionally a coalition of at least two major parties). The bicameral Parliament is elected through free and fair elections. The judiciary is independent.

Regional police forces are primarily responsible for maintaining internal security. The police, the royal constabulary, and investigative organizations concerned with internal and external security effectively are under civilian authority.

The market-based economy is export oriented and features a mixture of industry, services, and agriculture. Key industries include chemicals, oil refining, natural gas, machinery, and electronics. The agricultural sector produces fruit, vegetables, flowers, meat, and dairy products. Living standards and the level of social benefits are high. Unemployment is 3-percent; however, long-term unemployment, particularly among ethnic minorities, remains a problem.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, and the law and judiciary provide effective means of dealing with individual instances of abuse. Problems include violence and discrimination against women, child abuse, trafficking in women and children, and discrimination against minorities. The Government is taking steps to deal with all of these problems.

Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, which are two autonomous regions of the kingdom, also feature parliamentary systems and full constitutional protection of human rights. In practice respect for human rights in these islands generally is little different from that in the European Netherlands. The two Caribbean Governments have taken measures to address past reports of police brutality, but the islands' prison conditions remain substandard.

## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

#### a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

There were no reports of political or other extrajudicial killings.

#### b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

#### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits such practices, and there were no reports that officials employed them.

Following a visit to the country, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) published a report in 1998 that noted that it did not find any torture and few incidents in which officials did not treat arrested or detained persons correctly. The CPT made a positive assessment of the facilities at most police stations and at detention, secure psychiatric, and asylum centers. However, in March the Government rejected the CPT's recommendation that detainees at one maximum security prison be allowed better access to medical and recreational facilities, since the prison houses serious offenders who previously have escaped.

The Government took steps in the fall to facilitate the filing of complaints about police behavior, to create uniform complaint procedures, and to ensure that complaints are assessed by an independent committee.

A government-funded police professionalization program, as well as the establishment of a grievance committee, have contributed significantly to countering incidents of police brutality in both the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. No new incidents were reported, nor have there been any allegations of torture.

Prison conditions in the Netherlands meet minimum international standards, and the Government permits visits by human rights monitors.

In other reports, the CPT has urged the Governments of the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba to improve the "inhuman" conditions in Curacao's Koraal Specht prison and in cell blocks at the police stations on the islands of St. Maarten, Bonaire, and Aruba. The CPT's criticism focused on overcrowding, extremely poor sanitary conditions, poor food, and insufficient ventilation. The Committee also criticized widespread corruption and the mistreatment of prisoners by guards at Koraal Specht. The CPT's most recent report criticized the absence of any major improvement in conditions at the Koraal Specht prison.

The Dutch Government repeatedly offered financial assistance to the Government of the Netherlands Antilles for the construction of a new juvenile wing, a maximum security facility, and other improvements at Koraal Specht. The Government also sent experts on

prison organization and the training of guards. While acknowledging that more work needs to be done, Koraal Specht prison officials point to progress in improving conditions (prisoners now have mattresses, hygiene and food have improved, and construction has begun on a small new wing to relieve overcrowding). At the request of the Antillean Government, the CPT again visited Koraal Specht in January. In March it issued another critical report, which called for early improvements. On March 19, the Dutch Government concluded an agreement with the Antillean Government on the prison complex's renovation within 3 years. In September the Antillean Government contracted for the construction of a new facility at the prison complex that is expected to be ready by July 2000. The Dutch Government is prepared to contribute financially to the prison's renovation.

The Governments of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba allow access by nongovernmental organizations to prisons.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile, and the Government observes this prohibition.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the Government respects this provision in practice. The judiciary provides citizens with a fair and efficient judicial process.

The judicial system is based on the Napoleonic Code. A pyramidal system of cantonal, district, and appellate courts handles both criminal and civil cases. The Supreme Court acts as the highest appellate court and ensures the uniform interpretation of the law. In criminal trials, the law provides for a presumption of innocence and the right to public trial, to counsel (virtually free for low income persons), and to appeal. The law provides for the right to a fair trial, and the independent judiciary vigorously enforces this right.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution prohibits such practices, government authorities generally respect these prohibitions, and violations are subject to effective legal sanction.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government respects these rights in practice. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combine to ensure freedom of speech and of the press, including academic freedom.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for these rights, and the Government respects them in practice.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this right in practice. State subsidies are provided to religious organizations that maintain educational facilities.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The law provides for these rights, and the Government respects them in practice.

The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government cooperates with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. There were no reports of the forced expulsion of those having a valid claim to refugee status. The Government does not provide first asylum as such, but most asylum seekers (88 percent in 1998), except those who obviously came from a "safe country of origin" or stayed for some time in a "safe third country," are permitted to apply for resident status. Some of those (about 19 percent in 1998) whose applications eventually are denied nonetheless are permitted to stay temporarily on humanitarian grounds or as long as their country of origin is considered unsafe.

The focus of the Government's asylum policy is to protect genuine refugees while excluding economic refugees and illegal immigrants. In the early 1990's, the government adopted several measures to curb the relatively high influx of asylum seekers. This policy initially resulted in the desired decrease, but as other countries adopted even stricter laws, the influx rose again to 45,217 in 1998, a 31 percent increase over 1997. A new series of harsher rules adopted in 1998 aims to discourage economic refugees at all stages of the asylum process, by means of a stricter intake, accelerated processing of asylum requests, limited appeal procedures, and a denial of social assistance to asylum seekers who are screened out.

The Justice Ministry estimates on the basis of interviews with applicants that two-thirds of asylum seekers came to the country through alien smuggling organizations.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercise this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage.

No restrictions in law or in practice hinder the participation of women and minorities in government and politics. Women are nevertheless underrepresented in politics: A total of 54 of the 150 members of the second chamber of Parliament are women, as are 4 of the 15 cabinet ministers. However, the two Deputy Prime Ministers are women. The Government pursues an active policy to promote the participation of women in politics and public administration.

Although a minority, women also hold positions in the parliaments and cabinets of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

#### Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Human rights groups operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings. Government officials are very cooperative and responsive to their views.

In view of its longstanding tradition of hosting international legal tribunals, the Government facilitated the trial of two Libyans accused of the bombing of PanAm flight 103 on December 21, 1988, which killed 270 persons. By agreement among the parties, the Government provided Camp Zeist to the United Kingdom as an extraterritorial venue for the trial, which began in April and is being conducted under Scottish law.

The Netherlands also hosts the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the headquarters for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

#### Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution bans discrimination on the basis of any of these factors or on sexual orientation or political preference. The Government generally is effective in enforcing these provisions. Under the Equal Treatment Act, complainants may take offenders to court under civil law.

##### Women

A 1998 study reported that about 211,000 women are victims of violence by their former and present partners each year; about 50,000 of these are subjected to severe violence. In addition to the personal suffering, this form of violence against women costs society about \$175 million (332 million guilders) per year in hospitalization and absence from work.

The Government supports programs to reduce and prevent violence against women. Battered women find refuge in a network of 48 government-subsidized women's shelters offering the services of social workers and psychologists. In addition battered women who leave their domestic partners become eligible for social benefits, which include an adequate basic subsidy as well as an allowance for dependent children. Nongovernmental organizations also advise and assist women who are victims of sexual assault. Since 1991 marital rape has been a crime and carries the same penalty as nonmarital rape. Spousal abuse carries a one-third higher penalty than ordinary battery.

In addition to helping victims of sexual abuse, the Government has pursued an active prevention campaign through commercials and awareness training of educators. A recent evaluation showed that, on average, two-thirds of the population was positively influenced by the campaign.

Prostitution is legal, and since October the law no longer treats "organizing the prostitution of somebody else" as a crime when done with the consent of the prostitute. However, any form of forced prostitution remains punishable. All brothels now require

licenses issued by local governments with strict conditions to be observed by brothel owners. The Government's assumption is that by decriminalizing prostitution, licensing brothel operators, and improving working conditions and health care for prostitutes, while at the same time prohibiting the employment of minors and illegal immigrants, prostitution would be less susceptible to criminal organizations trafficking in women and children. An additional advantage is that the licensing system would make prostitution more transparent and easier for the police to monitor. Between 20,000 and 30,000 individuals are employed in prostitution. It is estimated that half of all prostitutes originate from non-European Union countries and are residing illegally in the country. Trafficking in women for the purpose of forced prostitution remains a problem, which the Government is giving priority to fighting (see Section 6.f.).

The law requires employers to take measures to protect workers from sexual harassment; research shows that about 245,000 women, or 6.6 percent of the female working population, are confronted with sexual intimidation in the work place each year. The Government funds an ongoing publicity campaign to increase awareness of the problem. As the largest employer, it has taken measures to counter harassment among civil servants, for example, in the police force.

Women increasingly are entering the job market, but traditional cultural factors and inadequate day care facilities tend to discourage them--especially women with young children--from working. The participation of women in the labor market increased significantly in the last 25 years, from 34 percent of the working-age female population in the mid-1970's to 54 percent in 1999. This percentage is expected to rise further. However, about 42 percent of women hold part-time jobs. In 1998 the government established favorable conditions for part-time employment by adopting a law that prohibits employers from treating part-time workers differently from those in full-time jobs.

Women often are underemployed and have less chance of promotion than their male colleagues. They often hold lower level positions than men, mostly because of their part-time status. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the difference in earnings between men and women remains at 24 percent. Some women nevertheless are making steady progress by moving into professional and high-visibility jobs.

In 1988 the Government started affirmative action programs for women. Collective labor agreements usually include one or more provisions to strengthen the position of women. Legislation mandates equal pay for equal work, prohibits dismissal because of marriage, pregnancy, or motherhood, and provides the basis for equality in other employment-related areas. A legislatively mandated Equal Treatment Commission actively pursues complaints of discrimination in these areas as well as allegations of pay discrimination.

The social welfare and national health systems provide considerable assistance to working women with families. Women are eligible for 16 weeks of maternity leave with full pay. The Parental Leave Law that requires employers to allow new mothers and fathers to work 20 hours a week for up to 6 months was made more flexible in 1997. The new law allows parents to take (unpaid) full-time leave during 3 months and to extend the leave over a period longer than 6 months to care for children up to 8 years old. Persons working fewer than 20 hours per week also will be entitled to parental leave.

## Children

The Government works to ensure the well-being of children through numerous well-funded health, education, and public information programs. The Council for the Protection of Children, operated through the Ministry of Justice, enforces child support orders, investigates cases of child abuse, and recommends remedies ranging from counseling to withdrawal of parental rights. In addition the Government has set up a popular hot line for children and a network of pediatricians who track suspected cases of child abuse on a confidential basis. There is no societal pattern of abuse of children.

An estimated 50,000 children are victims of child abuse each year, although only approximately 15,000 formal reports of child abuse are registered. As a result of abuse, 40 children died in 1998. The U.N. Commission on Children's Rights recently questioned the Government about its performance in this area. In particular the United Nations questioned the long waiting list for assistance to abused children. Approximately 7,000 abused children are on the waiting list.

International sex tourism involving the abuse of minor children is prosecutable. Since 1996 several Dutch citizens have been tried and convicted for the abuse of minors in other countries. The age of consent is 16. The prosecution of adults for sex with minors between the ages of 12 and 16 only occurs when a complaint is filed by an interested party. The new prostitution bill imposes heavier penalties on prostitution activities involving minors. The maximum sentence will be raised from 1 to 6 years.

Trafficking in female African youths for the purpose of prostitution is a problem (see Section 6.f.).

The maximum penalty for child pornography was raised in 1996 from 3 months' to 4 years' imprisonment, 6 years in the event of financial gain, and the maximum fine was more than tripled. New legislation allows for provisional arrest, house searches, and criminal financial investigations. Moreover the authorities no longer must prove that a person possesses child pornography for the purpose of distribution or public display. The Supreme Court ruled that the mere possession of child pornography is sufficient cause for prosecution. For the first time, in 1998 a suspect was convicted and sentenced solely on this ground.

The discovery of a major child pornography case in July resulted in stricter enforcement of antichild abuse legislation and the allocation of additional resources to enforcement efforts. It also underscored the absence of appropriate legislation to fight the dissemination of child pornography over the Internet. The Government believes that international cooperation is required to deal effectively with the latter problem but nevertheless began a national offensive against child pornography on the Internet. The police now are monitoring the Internet in a large, year-long pilot project, and four suspected pornographers were arrested in late 1998.

## People with Disabilities

There is no discrimination against disabled persons in employment, education, or in the provision of other state services. Local governments increasingly mandate access to public buildings for the disabled.

## Religious Minorities

There were a number of complaints about anti-Semitism on Internet sites set up by Dutch citizens.

## National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The integration of racial and ethnic minorities into the social and cultural mainstream remains a difficult problem.

The Government pursues an active campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of racism and discrimination. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and nationality and allows those who claim that they have been discriminated against to take alleged offenders to court under civil law. In 1997 the prosecution norms for discrimination were tightened. Penalties were raised for discrimination by political parties, companies, and institutions, because organizational discrimination was considered more dangerous than discrimination by individuals. The police were required to report any complaint of discrimination meticulously. Any policeman guilty of discrimination now risks disciplinary measures as well as criminal legal proceedings. According to the latest statistics, in 1997, 112 persons or organizations were tried on discrimination charges. These included 37 labor disputes, 20 cases of defamation, and 11 consumer disputes.

Racially motivated incidents ranged from racist pamphlets and painted slogans to bomb threats, harassment, physical abuse, and destruction of property. However, no officially recorded incidents of a life-threatening nature were directed against ethnic minorities. The National Bureau to Fight Racial Discrimination was founded in July. This Bureau is to collect nationwide statistics on incidents of discrimination. Local antidiscrimination bureaus previously collected such data, but their registration methods differed and the resulting data were incomplete. Due to startup problems, the National Bureau had not yet produced new data; however, incomplete data suggest a further increase in complaints. The Equal Opportunities Committee also reported an increase in complaints about discrimination. These increases were attributed to wider knowledge of the complaints process, as well as to changes in societal attitudes.

Immigrant groups face some discrimination in housing and employment. These groups, concentrated in the larger cities, suffer from a high rate of unemployment. The Government has been working for several years with employers' groups and unions to reduce minority unemployment levels to the national average. As a result of these efforts, in recent years the rate of job creation among ethnic minorities was higher than among the general population. Unemployment among ethnic minorities nevertheless is still about three times as high as within the native population.

The 1998 Act on the Stimulation of Labor Participation by Ethnic Minorities is intended to increase job opportunities for ethnic minorities. It requires employers with a work force of over 35 people to register their non-Dutch employees. Employers are to strive for a composition of their work force that reflects the regional working population. They must submit their annual social action plans, including recruitment targets, to the regional labor bureaus. The Labor Inspectorate oversees implementation of the law.

The privately run Discrimination on the Internet Registration Center recorded 121

complaints in 1998 about discriminatory statements, racial discrimination, or anti-Semitism on the Internet. Most statements were removed voluntarily by the authors at the Center's request. In one case, the Center requested that criminal proceedings be initiated; such a request is still under review in 20 other cases. In July two rightwing extremists were convicted for incitement to hatred and discrimination on the Internet. This was the first time that discrimination on the Internet resulted in a conviction.

## Section 6 Worker Rights

### a. The Right of Association

Membership in labor unions is open to all workers including armed forces personnel, the police, and civil service employees. Workers are entitled to form or join unions of their own choosing without prior government authorization, and unions are free to affiliate with national trade union federations. This right is exercised freely.

Unions are free of control by the Government and political parties. Union members may and do participate in political activities.

All workers have the right to strike, except for most civil servants who have other institutionalized means of protection and redress. Industrial relations are very harmonious, and strikes are infrequent. In 1998 some 33 labor days per 1,000 workers were lost, mostly over union demands for higher pay and a 36-hour workweek. There is no retribution against striking workers.

About 28 percent of the work force is unionized, but union-negotiated collective bargaining agreements are usually extended to cover about three-quarters of the work force. The white-collar unions' membership is the fastest growing.

The four union federations are active internationally, without restriction.

### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The right to organize and bargain collectively is recognized and well established. Discrimination against workers because of union membership is illegal and does not occur.

Collective bargaining agreements are negotiated in the framework of the "Social Partnership" developed between trade unions and private employers. Representatives of the main union federations, employers' organizations, and the government meet each autumn to discuss labor issues, including wage levels and their relation to the state of the economy and to international competition. The discussions lead to a central accord with social as well as economic goals for the coming year. Under this umbrella agreement, unions and employers in various sectors negotiate sectoral agreements, which the government usually extends to all companies in the sector.

Antiunion discrimination is prohibited. Union federations and employers' organizations are represented, along with independent experts, on the Social and Economic Council. The Council is the major advisory board for the government on policies and legislation regarding national and international social and economic matters.

There are no export processing zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

Forced or compulsory labor, including that performed by children, is prohibited by the Constitution and generally does not occur; however, trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of forced prostitution is a problem (see Sections 5 and 6.f.).

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits forced and bonded labor by children, and this prohibition is enforced effectively (see Section 6.c.). The minimum age for employment is 16 years, and for full-time work it is conditioned on completion of the mandatory 10 years of schooling. Those still in school at the age of 16 may not work more than 8 hours per week. Persons under the age of 18 are prohibited by law from working at night, overtime, or in areas dangerous to their physical or mental well-being. Anyone working more than 4.5 hours per day is entitled to a 30-minute break. The laws are effectively enforced by the tripartite Labor Commission, which monitors hiring practices and conducts inspections.

The Government takes a leading role in the international campaign against child labor in developing countries. The main labor federation, together with the U.N. Children's Fund and several nongovernmental organizations, also started a campaign against the sale of products suspected of being made through child labor and for a "trademark" for clothing made without child labor.

Holiday work and after-school jobs are tied to very strict rules, which are set in the work-time act, the Child Labor Regulation (for young people under 16 years), and the Working Conditions Decree. Observance of the rules is overseen by the Social Ministry's Labor Inspection office. Although child labor is banned, an increasing number of children work for pay during holidays. The parents of such children are to be reported officially by labor inspectors, and the Public Prosecutor may decide to prosecute the parents for violating the ban on child labor. In 1997 some 20 employers were cited for employing children under age 13 to do holiday work.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The minimum wage for adults is established by law and can be adjusted every 6 months to changes in the cost-of-living index. Over the last few years, the statutory minimum wage has been pegged to the average wage in collective labor contracts. The gross minimum wage is about \$1,172 (2,345 guilders) per month. For workers earning the minimum wage, employers currently pay \$3,750 a year (6,000 guilders) in premiums for social security benefits, which includes medical insurance. Only 3 percent of workers earn the minimum wage because collective bargaining agreements, which normally are extended across a sector, usually set a minimum wage well above the legislated minimum. The Government, unions, and employers have taken measures to increase the number of minimum wage jobs and to decrease employers' social payments in order to lower the cost of hiring new workers and to create more jobs, especially for the long-term unemployed.

A reduced minimum wage applies to young people under the age of 23--one of the demographic groups with the highest rate of unemployment--intended to provide

incentives for their employment. This wage ranges from 34.5 percent of the adult minimum wage for workers 16 years of age to 85 percent for those 22 years of age. The legislated minimum wage and social benefits available to all minimum wage earners provide an adequate standard of living for workers and their families.

Although the law establishes a 40-hour workweek, the average workweek for those with full-time jobs is 37.5 hours. This workweek is the result of agreements reached in collective bargaining on shorter workweeks, often in conjunction with more flexible working hours. This combination makes it possible to adapt shorter working hours to the specific situation in a particular business or branch of industry.

Working conditions, including comprehensive occupational safety and health standards set by law and regulations, are monitored actively by the tripartite Labor Commission. Enforcement is effective. Workers may refuse to continue working at a hazardous work site. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs also monitors standards through its Labor Inspectorate.

#### f. Trafficking in Persons

The maximum sentence for trafficking in persons is 6 years. In cases involving minors, severe physical violence, or organized trafficking, the maximum sentence is 10 years. Article 250 of the Criminal Code prohibits trafficking in persons, which is defined as bringing another person into prostitution by means of force or another act of violence; or by abusing authority ensuing from an actual relationship, circumstance, or by misrepresentation; or by undertaking any action that the perpetrator knows, or could reasonably suspect, may bring another into prostitution.

The country is a major destination for trafficked women. An estimated 20,000 persons per year are trafficked into the country, according to government officials. In July 44 persons were arrested in connection with a large trafficking network that used the Netherlands as a transit point between Italy and Scandinavia. In August four more persons were arrested in an unrelated case involving the trafficking of women from Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and Romania for prostitution in a border region; a number of other networks were dismantled in border regions during the first half of the year. Some 230 persons were arrested for trafficking in 1998, compared with 139 in 1997 and 89 in 1996.

The Government has an active policy to combat trafficking in persons. High-priority government measures include a more aggressive prosecution policy as well as closer international cooperation. A number of police forces have established special units to deal with the problem. The Government distinguishes between alien smuggling and trafficking in persons.

According to the Justice Ministry, some 20,000 to 30,000 persons work in prostitution, about half of them from non-EU countries who are residing illegally in the country. The Dutch Foundation Against Trafficking in Women estimates that each year between 2,500 and 3,000 women and girls are brought into the country for the purpose of prostitution, primarily from Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Far East.

In 1998 a ruling was obtained under the Aliens Law to prevent illegal residents, who may have become victims of trafficking, from being expelled before investigations are

completed. A victim is allowed time (3 months) to consider pressing charges. Victims who do so are allowed to stay in the country until the judicial process is completed. During this period, the victim receives legal, financial, and psychological assistance. In special circumstances, a residence permit is granted on humanitarian grounds. After completion of the judicial process, illegal prostitutes returning to their native countries are eligible for temporary financial assistance.

African women make up a sizeable portion of the estimated 15,000 foreign women working as prostitutes in the country. According to the authorities, the most widely used ploy for African women is the fraudulent use of special asylum procedures for minors, who are virtually ensured entry. Although most such women are not actually under age 18, all claim to be. In the absence of any identification, these claims at least initially are accepted. Once at the open-door asylum center, they settle down for a few days before disappearing only to turn up later as prostitutes in the country or elsewhere in Europe.

Traffickers use tried and tested techniques on these African women, such as threatening their families back home and indebtedness (they begin at brothels owing their employers their purchase price of \$20,000 to \$30,000). Recent reports that traffickers also exploit their traditional religious and spiritual beliefs and use "Voodoo" measures as a method of control are questioned by one academic study.

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