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State urged to tackle human trafficking

Government and civil society need to take serious action against human trafficking in SA, according to a Human Sciences Research Council report.

STAFF REPORTER

Johannesburg

GOVERNMENT and civil society need to take serious action against human trafficking in SA, according to a Human Sciences Research Council report released yesterday.

The study, released at a National Prosecuting Authority conference on the subject, says human trafficking in SA is a serious problem and warrants intervention on all fronts.

Victims are mostly women and children and they are trafficked for a variety of purposes, including prostitution, pornography, domestic servitude, forced labour, begging, criminal activity, and for the removal of body parts, or muti.

SA is a destination country for long-distance flows of mainly women from Thailand, the Philippines, India, China, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and the Ukraine, who enter SA at OR Tambo International Airport.

From within Africa, people are trafficked across SA's borders, mostly from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and to a lesser extent Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho. Longer- distance trafficking involves victims from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Rwanda, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria and Somalia.

The albino community was also identified as vulnerable to human traffickers for the harvesting of body parts, due to the belief that a white skin had potent powers, the report says. Trafficking of South Africans out of the country was less of a problem, but eight cases were identified between January 2004 and January 2008. Sapa

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