

# Trafficking bill to close loopholes

KAMINI PADAYACHEE

UNATTENDED and vulnerable children face the risk of being trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation during the World Cup.

This is according to a study done on Human Trafficking in South Africa and other African countries which was released by the Human Sciences Research Council yesterday.

The study was commissioned by the National Prosecuting Authority and the research team was headed by Professor Carol Allais from the sociology department of the University of South Africa.

Referring to existing research by Western Cape NGO Molo Songololo, the study says there is a risk of children being exploited during the World Cup

as schools will be closed for the duration of the soccer tournament.

The study also showed that only eight South Africans had been trafficked to other countries between 2004 to 2008, but that South Africa was a major destination for trafficked people, predominantly women from Thailand, Philippines, India, China, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and the Ukraine for purposes of sexual exploitation.

The research showed that local and international organised crime syndicates, as well as individual South Africans and Bulgarian agents with ex-military backgrounds are largely involved in international trafficking.

Meanwhile, a senior Justice department official has warned MPs not to rush through

legislation aimed at dealing with preventing human trafficking just because the World Cup was around the corner.

Yesterday's caution by the deputy director-general for legislation, Deon Rudman, was supported by the DA.

Rudman was responding to a suggestion by ANC MP John Jeffery that in view of the expected flood of visitors during the month-long soccer tournament Parliament might need to push through the bill quickly.

Rudman said the Sexual Offences Act and Children's Act already had provisions related to human trafficking, while the new bill sought to close loopholes and ensure greater protection for vulnerable women and children. However, he warned against fast-tracking the bill.

