

Ambassador John R. Miller

Testimony before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China
Combating Human Trafficking in China: Domestic and International Efforts
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Thank you for the opportunity to address this important subject.

Trafficking in persons is modern-day slavery, a global phenomenon that affects human rights, public health and international security.

Human traffickers today use kidnapping, fraud, psychological abuse and beatings to force men, women and children into labor and sex exploitation.

Today's forms of slavery extend into every country in the world, including the United States. The *Trafficking in Persons Report* released by the Department of State in June 2005 covers 150 countries, including China.

Our government estimates that every year, up to 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders into bondage. And that's across international borders.

Modern-day slavery takes many forms:

- There is domestic servitude.
- There is forced factory and farm labor.
- There is forced conscription of child soldiers.
- And there is sex slavery.

We must remember that modern-day slavery is often linked to organized crime. The FBI puts the revenue figure for organized crime in the billions. We have the drug trade, the arms trade and the people trade. Human beings are sold and resold and sold again until, because of sickness or age, they are disposed of.

China, like many other Asian countries, faces a huge problem of Chinese women and girls trafficked abroad for sexual exploitation. Chinese of both sexes migrate all over the world for low-skilled labor and a significant number of these fall victim to involuntary servitude. There are also reports of involuntary servitude (forced labor) among migrant workers moving internally within China in search of economic opportunities.

I've been talking figures and categories, but let me tell you the story of one of the lucky ones, a North Korean survivor who was trafficked in China.

In 1997, Ms. Kyeong Sook Cha fled from North Korea and in 2003 entered South Korea with two daughters and a son. But between those years, she entered a hellish netherworld—abused in domestic servitude and labor servitude, as were her two daughters.

Ms. Cha went to look for work in China when she could no longer feed her three children. Twice she was arrested by Chinese authorities, forcibly repatriated, and sent to a North Korean detention center. In China, her youngest daughter fell victim to traffickers as well. Ms. Cha traveled from village to village in China looking for her daughters, and eventually fell into debt bondage to a Korean-Chinese man who “purchased” her younger daughter to return to live with them and forced them both to labor on his farm.

After enduring the abuse of her captor, she and her daughter eventually escaped, were detained and repatriated to North Korea, escaped back into China, and began to earn money as a manager in a karaoke establishment. She searched for her older daughter by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper, and miraculously found her. Making their way through China, Vietnam and Cambodia, the reunited family took residence in South Korea two years ago.

Ms. Cha's story personifies the fates of thousands of the world's poor pushed to become migrants subjected to conditions of debt bondage, commercial sexual exploitation, and/or forced labor upon arrival in destination countries, including China.

To date, the Government of China has made limited progress in addressing key deficiencies in its efforts to address trafficking in persons. Although the government has undertaken some efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking-related crime, much more needs to be done to detect and protect victims of trafficking.

The human rights conditions and humanitarian plight of victims trafficked to, from and through China are important concerns of Members of Congress and the whole international community. The paradigm we have created to combat trafficking in persons is a victim-centered approach that grows from a concept known as the three "Ps": prevention, protection, and prosecution.

Prevention is self-evident but underemployed. Vulnerable people, especially women and children, should be warned that promises of work abroad are often traps. The U.S. government vigorously works to raise awareness of this issue. There is extensive information, in English and Chinese, available on the Internet regarding human trafficking, including information on ways to identify a victim and where to find resources for victims. Unfortunately, there are other Web sites that offer vital information about this global epidemic and violations of human rights that cannot be accessed by Chinese citizens. We have repeatedly urged the Chinese government to respect its international commitments to freedom of expression and to allow for the free flow of information in the media and on the Internet as a means to educate readers on human rights issues and the danger of human trafficking.

We are concerned about continued reports from NGOs and other reliable sources of an increase in the trafficking of foreign women to all parts of China as forced brides or for commercial sexual exploitation. Fueling this problem is a major gender gap—the ratio of male births to female births—that has always been present in China but has been exacerbated since the 1980s by China's draconian birth-limitation regulations. The Chinese government has recognized that this is one of the problems that fuels trafficking, but have yet to take measures to reduce the effects of the restrictive birth policy.

A bit later, you'll hear from Abraham Lee who's seen the situation first hand through his work with underground churches in Northern China. Greater efforts must be made to warn Korean women about the problem of kidnapping by some Chinese or North Korean men along the border who prey on unaccompanied women. We have called on the Chinese government to identify and protect all victims of trafficking, including North Koreans. They should not be penalized by deportation, arrest or other means because they are victims.

The government does show signs of addressing forced labor conditions among informal and formal sector laborers, which continue to be reported throughout China. For example, as Roger Plant will attest later, the Chinese government in partnership with a U.S. government grant to ILO has embarked on a project to prevent forced labor practices in nine key provinces within the Pan-Pearl Delta region. Additionally, in the past year, the government conducted some anti-trafficking training for law enforcement officials.

In terms of protection, China has not implemented a national referral mechanism to provide trafficking victims with adequate shelter and care, nor have they adopted a national plan to address human trafficking, although they tell us one is in the works. The government's record on protection of victims of trafficking varies widely from province to province, with regional networks of support funded by the All China Women's Federation, international organizations, and local NGOs in operation across China.

To prosecute, regional cooperation is essential. The traffickers function as long as they operate beyond the law and between systems of enforcement. A good example of regional cooperation is the 2004 agreement signed by six Mekong Delta countries, including China, to hunt down and convict traffickers and sensitively repatriate victims. The Chinese Government reports that the police handled nearly 2,000 cases of trafficking in 2005, resulting in more than 3,000 women rescued. However, the lack of transparency and access to data prevents validation of these reports.

This Administration is committed to ending the trade in human beings. The Departments of State, Labor, Justice, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services and the U.S. Agency for International Development are working together to combat this scourge both at home and abroad. Since 2001, we have contributed approximately \$375 million toward anti-trafficking programs and we are seeing results.

In 2004, we saw 3000 convictions of traffickers worldwide and 39 countries amended, or passed new anti-trafficking in persons laws.

Like the struggle of the 19th century abolitionists, this 21st century struggle for freedom is one we can and must win—everywhere in the world. As President Bush said before signing the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, “The trade in human beings continues in our time and we are called by conscience and compassion to bring this cruel practice to an end.”