

Contemporary forms of slavery in

Uruguay

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Map of Latin America



Map of Uruguay



1. Background

In October 2004, President Vázquez's Frente Amplio won the general election in Uruguay, ending more than 150 years of two-party dominance and reflecting a disillusionment with the Colorado and National parties.

The economic recession started in Uruguay in 1998 and, following events in Argentina, became a financial crisis in 2002 when a number of banks collapsed. This had a dramatic impact on the standard of living of many families as unemployment rose from 10 to 17 per cent (with less than a fifth entitled to unemployment benefits) and those living in poverty jumped from 18 to 31 per cent between 1998 and 2003. Those living in extreme poverty doubled to reach 2.8 per cent of the population by 2003.² The crisis hit those who were unemployed or self employed hardest and household income fell by more than 20 per cent from 1998-2002.³

However, the crisis has not had a serious impact on social indicators like health and education, which remain much better than other countries in Latin America. In 2003, 95 per cent of primary school aged children were enrolled and nearly all completed their education. Enrollment in secondary school has also increased, but about half drop out before completion - mostly from poorer families.⁴

While Uruguay continues to have one of the most equal income distributions in South America, social exclusion is a problem, particularly for Uruguayans of African descent, the rural poor, young people and women. Domestic violence is a widespread problem with one survey recording that 46 per cent of women married or living with a partner had been subjected to domestic violence in the previous year.⁵ Children are most affected by poverty with some 50,000 minors neither working nor studying and more than 50 per cent of those living in poverty being less than 18.⁶

There has been a strong economic recovery in 2004 with GDP growth in double figures and unemployment falling, but this had not fed through to a reduction in poverty levels by the end of 2005.

Development indicators¹

Classified as a severely indebted upper middle income economy (\$3,256 - \$10,065 GNI per capita).

Population: 3.4 million

Urban population: 93 per cent of total population

GNI per capita: US\$ 3,950

Poverty: 31 per cent of the total population below the national poverty line

Life expectancy: 75 years

Infant mortality: 12 per 1,000 live births

Child malnutrition: Not available

Access to an improved water source: 98 per cent of the population

Illiteracy: 2 per cent of the population over 14

¹ Latest statistics available have been used, primarily from the World Bank, World Development Indicators database, August 2005.

² World Bank, *Country Assistance Strategy for the Oriental Republic of Uruguay*, 2005-2010, World Bank, 2005, page 30.

³ World Bank, *op. cit.*, page 17.

⁴ World Bank, *op. cit.*, page 31.

⁵ World Bank, *op. cit.*, page 32.

⁶ Instituto de Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay (INAU), *Construyendo juntos el futuro INAU*, INAU, Montevideo, 31 October 2005, page 1.

Uruguay's adherence to some of the principal international standards which prohibit contemporary forms of slavery

International standards	Ratified	Signed but not ratified	Not signed or ratified
ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1929.	✓		
UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956.	✓		
UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966.	✓		
UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979.	✓		
UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, 1990.	✓		
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999.	✓		
UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, 2000.	✓		

2. The commercial sexual exploitation of children

2.1 Child prostitution in Uruguay

There is a lack of statistical data regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, the information below shows that the existence of child prostitution in various parts of the country has long been recognised as a serious problem by both governmental and non-governmental institutions.

In 1995, the Nationalist Deputy, Daniel Corbo, compiled information from the magazines *Postata* and *Brecha* along with cases from the National Institute for Children (Instituto Nacional del Menor or INAME) relating to the sexual exploitation of children in parks, clubs and massage parlours in Montevideo. Corbo identified the Rodó park and the port as areas where child prostitution was particularly prevalent and noted that children who were in the care of INAME were involved. He was also concerned that much of the information he gathered implicated the police. He formed an inter-ministerial commission to look at the issue, which concluded that child prostitution did exist in Montevideo and in various other Departments of the country, but could not confirm the existence of organised networks.⁷

The centre of Montevideo and Ciudad Vieja were also identified in a 1998 United Nations report on Uruguay, *Perfil del País*, as places where minors were prostituting themselves. More recently Plaza Independencia, Parque Batlle (where boys are also involved), El Prado and part of Cordón were all highlighted as areas in Montevideo where child prostitution takes place.

The UN report also noted that the use of children in massage parlours was on the increase. This was confirmed in July 2001, when an inter-institutional commission set up by INAME informed the Uruguayan Parliament of the existence of 83 massage parlours in Montevideo

which “take advantage of or encourage the use of minors”. According to the commission, around 30 of these establishments contacted children by mobile phone and gave them instructions on which house they should go to.⁸

On 29 May 2001, *El País* referred to a joint study carried out by the prostitutes’ union, AMEPU, and the Ministry of Public Health which confirmed cases of child prostitution in the Departments of Maldonado, Artigas, Rivera, Canelones, La Paz and Las Piedras.⁹ In addition, the Chief of Police in Paysandú confirmed the existence of child prostitution in this Department as early as 1997. AMEPU has noted the increase in child prostitution across the country, particularly in Maldonado.

In May 2001, the Chief of Police, the Director of the Department of Health and Naná, the owner of a local brothel, all agreed child prostitution was increasing rapidly in Maldonado, including the use of male prostitutes or “taxi boys”. Some have attributed this to the poverty in the zones on the outskirts of Maldonado. Naná believed that parents were pushing their children into prostitution and, once the child became accustomed to it, they continued in order to support their parents.¹⁰

There is no indication that this problem has diminished in recent years. The frontiers, suburban areas of Montevideo and Maldonado and Punta del Este are all highlighted as zones where child prostitution takes place. The National Crime Prevention Department (Dirección Nacional de Prevención del Delito or DNPd) also considers that national centres of tourism are areas which are inclined towards child prostitution, but no investigation into this issue has been carried out.¹¹

Research carried out between May and August 2004, highlights the number of children who are vulnerable to commercial child sexual exploitation.

⁷ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *Una mirada a la situación de la prostitución infantil y adolescente en Uruguay*, UNICEF, Montevideo, 2004, pages 32-33.

⁸ *Diario La República*, July 2001. Quoted in Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 17.

⁹ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 58.

¹⁰ *El País*, 20 May 2001. Quoted in Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 50.

¹¹ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 20.

For example, in June 2004 alone, the police in the interior of the country received 72 requests to locate missing children, 15 of whom were girls (primarily from the Departments of Canelones and Maldonado).

At the end of June 2004, there were 601 cases of children who had been reported missing from their homes or from accommodation provided by INAME who still had not been located, some of which dated back to 2001. These figures only cover cases that have been reported to the police and do not include Montevideo.¹²

In addition to those reported missing, another group of children who would be vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation are those that are already on the street. Gurises Unidos estimated in 2003, that there are some 3,100 children living or working on the streets of Montevideo and the Metropolitan area.¹³

Experts who were interviewed both for the UNICEF research in 2004 and by Anti-Slavery International at the end of 2005 confirmed the continuing existence of child prostitution.

For example, lawyers working for Infancia, Adolescencia y Ciudadanía (IACI) dealt with various cases of girls between 12-16 who were in prostitution in Montevideo and many of these girls were first involved in commercial sexual exploitation before they were 12 years old.¹⁴

2.2 Child pornography and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children

Research carried out for the Ministry of the Interior between May and August 2004 found that individuals in Uruguay could easily access, share and distribute child pornography through the internet, particularly via internet groups,

instant messaging services and information exchange programmes. It is estimated that some 400,000 Uruguayans were using the internet in 2004, up eight per cent from 2000.¹⁵

During the investigation, the researchers requested membership of 80 MSN internet groups which exchanged material involving child pornography and were accepted by all but two. Only three of the 78 were closed down during the course of the investigation. They requested access to five Yahoo groups and were accepted into three. None of the Yahoo groups were active for more than one week.

The researchers also set up groups themselves. One group set up on MSN using an explicit reference to child pornography, received only two requests to join in two months. The other, set up on Yahoo, used an existing group name and received 175 requests in three days. The Yahoo group functioned for five days before being closed down, apparently by the internet provider. The MSN group continued until the end of the research.¹⁶

Through the MSN Messenger service the researchers were able to make direct contact with individuals. Through these virtual links the researchers had conversations with one contact who said that he bought two girls in Spain and now used them in the production of child pornography. The information they obtained led them to suspect that individuals were also involved in the sale of babies and children from Latin America.¹⁷ The researchers also used Kazaa and iMesh programmes, which allow users to exchange audio and video, as well as software, while on line.

At the end of the four months, the researchers had identified 120 groups on MSN or Yahoo dealing with both heterosexual and homosexual child pornography and obtained 2,234 photos and 143 videos.¹⁸

¹² A. S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Tráfico de Niños Con Fines de Explotación Sexual*, Ministerio del Interior, Dirección Nacional de Prevención Social del Delito, Montevideo, August 2004, page 6.

¹³ A. S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Tráfico de Niños Con Fines de Explotación Sexual*, op. cit., page 7.

¹⁴ Interview carried out by Anti-Slavery International on 15 November 2005.

¹⁵ A.S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Pornografía Infantil en Internet*, Ministerio del Interior, Dirección Nacional de Prevención Social del Delito, Montevideo, August 2004, page 5

¹⁶ A.S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Pornografía Infantil en Internet*, op.cit., page 12.

¹⁷ A.S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Pornografía Infantil en Internet*, op.cit., page 13.

¹⁸ A.S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Pornografía Infantil en Internet*, op.cit., page 15.

The Parliamentarian, Daisy Tourné, also said that she had information relating to a network which edited child pornography in Uruguay, but her contact was afraid and disappeared before she could get evidence relating to these activities.¹⁹

Sex tourism has been identified by various institutions as a problem in Uruguay. In 2001, INAME considered that child sex tourism was “becoming habitual in coastal zones of Canelones and Maldonado” and a report in *El País* on 20 May in the same year highlighted Punta del Este as an area where sex tourism took place.²⁰

The Director of the DNPD, Graciela López, confirmed that they had found cases of children who were involved in prostitution with foreign tourists and UNICEF has also raised concerns that children could be sexually exploited by sex tourists on farms in areas which are not traditionally associated with tourism.

2.3 The legal framework and the application of the law

Prostitution is legal in Uruguay for adults in brothels which are registered with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of the Interior. The authorities carry out periodic visits to these brothels to ensure that everything is in order. Child prostitution is found on the street, in hotels and individual houses, but not usually in brothels because of Government regulation of these properties.

In September 2004, the Government approved a law (Ley No. 17.815, *Violencia sexual comercial o no comercial cometida contra niños o adolescentes*), which prohibits and punishes the production of pornographic materials using minors; the distribution, storage or offer of any pornographic material using images of children; paying or promising economic benefits to a child

in order to make them perform sexual acts; and contributing, in whatever form, to the prostitution, exploitation or sexual servitude of children (Articles 1, 2, 4 and 5).²¹

Other offences set out in the Penal Code which criminalise the rape and corruption of minors, have been on the statute book for many years, but have rarely been used. For example, in 2000, there were only 11 cases of child prostitution reported to the DNPD in Montevideo, three in Maldonado and one in Flores and none of these were processed.²²

In 2003, the police in the interior of the country documented just seven cases relating to child prostitution.²³

One of the principle reasons for the low rates of reporting and processing of child prostitution cases is that the police generally view the child as someone who is breaking the law rather than as a victim of commercial sexual exploitation who needs specialised assistance. The Department for Public Order (La Dirección de Orden Público) admit that they routinely move on any minors who are publicly involved in prostitution.²⁴

In other cases children are likely to be detained or even prosecuted. IACI worked with one child who was charged, convicted and jailed for prostitution. The courts often view child prostitutes in the same way as the police and make little effort to support or protect the child. It is common for the name, address and pictures of the child to be released and printed in the press.

Even if the police view the child as being at risk or abandoned, they are still likely to detain them. The child will then be sent to the Commissioner for Minors and from there to the Minors’ Court. As there is no specialised assistance or shelters for children who have been sexual exploited they will normally be sent back to their families or to INAME.

¹⁹ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 31.

²⁰ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, pages 17 and 50.

²¹ In the same month the Government also incorporated the UN Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography into domestic legislation.

²² Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 20.

²³ A. S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Tráfico de Niños Con Fines de Explotación Sexual*, *op. cit.*, page 7.

²⁴ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 25.

INAME's care arrangements for children have been criticised by several organisations. One social worker said a minor would be better on the streets than in INAME and it has also been alleged that police blackmail children for sexual favours by threatening to send them to INAME.²⁵

While the number of children who have been involved in prostitution that have registered with INAME has dropped from 14 in 1996 to just three in 2000, INAME argues that this is because they no longer record prostitution as the cause of entry because it is stigmatising for the children. INAME also argues that many children are not in their care because their families want them back on the streets where they can earn money.²⁶

Children are reluctant to go to the authorities for a variety of reasons, including because they fear being prosecuted or institutionalised. Some children will also want to avoid the shame and stigma of being publicly recognised as a prostitute. Others will consider that they are in control of the situation and therefore will not view it as exploitation (e.g. they are making money for themselves or their families or are in love with their pimp who they think is going to marry them).

The reluctance to make official complaints is not limited to the children involved. Part of the reason for this may be that it is presumed that the police do not investigate or pursue those who are involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

However, it also reflects the fact that, up until very recently, there has been a refusal in most sections of society to publicly recognise that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is a reality in Uruguay.

This despite the fact that in 1998 a public opinion poll found that around 80 per cent of the population believed that there was child prostitution in Uruguay, with 25 per cent having some direct knowledge of the issue. This suggests that the problem is well known, even if people do not want to discuss it publicly or report it.²⁷

2.4 The Government's response

In recent years the Government has taken steps to raise awareness and respond to the commercial exploitation of Uruguayan children. These initiatives include the establishment of free national and city wide telephone lines for any child at risk from an abusive situation and an awareness raising campaign to combat child sex tourism, launched by INAME in 2001.

In 2001, INAME also formed an inter-institutional commission to prevent the sexual exploitation of minors which involved various Ministries, NGOs and UNICEF. The commission proposed to draw together existing information on commercial sexual exploitation; consider harsher penal sanctions for the crime; and to look at the total prohibition of employment of minors for any purpose in places where prostitution takes place.

In September 2004, the Government passed new laws to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children (see above for details) and a new Children's Code (Código de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia, Ley No. 17.823). The Code states that any authority which receives a complaint in relation to child prostitution, pornography or any form of abuse or mistreatment (physical, sexual or psychological) must communicate this immediately to the competent judicial authority (Articles 130-131). This should encourage more cases to be registered and pursued.

On 27 October 2004, the Government followed up the legal changes by issuing a Decree (Decreto 385/004) that formally established the National Committee to eradicate commercial and non-commercial sexual exploitation of children (Comité Nacional para la Erradicación de la Explotación Sexual Comercial y No Comercial de la Niñez y la Adolescencia).

The National Committee is convened by INAU (Instituto de Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay) which replaced INAME in 2004 as the body

²⁵ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 27.

²⁶ Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 26.

²⁷ Carried out in October 1998 for *El Reloj on Canal 10*. Quoted in Quima Oliver i Ricart, *op. cit.*, page 40

responsible for implementing policies for the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Other Ministries involved in the National Committee include health, interior and tourism, as well as representation from NGOs, UNICEF and the Inter-American Institute for the Child.

The main task of the Committee is to draw up and implement a National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial and Non-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uruguay. The plan will be for at least a five year period and provides the opportunity to implement substantive, integrated and properly funded programmes to eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

2.5 Conclusions

While the existence of child prostitution is not in question, there is no reliable or detailed information about the extent of the problem, the profile of the children involved and whether child prostitution rings are being run by organised criminal networks. Qualitative and quantitative research is urgently needed to address this information gap. This information is essential in deciding the national policy to combat child prostitution because it can indicate whether the increase in poverty is fuelling child prostitution, whether the children are coming from particular regions, whether there is an increase in demand, etc.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children in Uruguay remains an issue which people are reluctant to publicly recognise. Awareness raising campaigns are needed which make clear that child prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation of minors is a crime and that all member of society have a responsibility to speak out against it, and a role to play in its eradication.

Police officers and members of the judiciary also need to be trained to respond appropriately to minors, particularly those involved in prostitution, to ensure that they are not re-victimised. Legislation relating to commercial sexual exploitation needs to be rigorously implemented and opportunities for better inter-



above: Children under the care of the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents (INAU) take part in festivities on 6 January 2006

institutional governmental co-ordination considered. For example, child pornography needs to be combated through joint action by the Government and internet service providers, as the current control mechanisms do not function effectively enough.

INAU provides assistance, but not specialised help to children who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation. For example, up till now, its free telephone advice line, La Línea Azul, has not distinguished between calls relating to prostitution and sexual abuse. Specialised programmes and projects to provide assistance should therefore be set up with appropriate training for those who are working with children who have been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.

INAU's predecessor, INAME, has been criticised for not taking sufficient action against child prostitution. The institution's mandate may need to be reviewed to give it powers to carry out proactive investigations into clandestine venues where child prostitution may be taking place and not just operate by checking registered brothels. If it is not appropriate for INAU to perform this function then a special investigative team may be needed within the police.

3. The worst forms of child labour in Uruguay

In 2000, the Government created a National Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour (Comité Nacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil - CETI) which drew up an Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour in Uruguay, 2003-2005.

The Plan shows the Government's recognition of a problem and a commitment to tackling it, as does the approval in September 2004 of the New Children's Code (Ley 17.823, Código de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia). Article 161 of the Code establishes 15 as the minimum age for working, but exceptions are allowed. However, these exceptions are not defined and there is no criteria for doing so. Nor has the Government defined the worst forms of child labour, as required by ILO Convention 182.

While there are a number of good quality reports on child labour in Uruguay,²⁸ there is no research available which would indicate how many children are working in the unconditional worst forms of child labour (i.e. the kind of work which is analogous to slavery).

As noted above, there is a clear problem with the sexual exploitation of children, but there are also indicators that children may be exposed to other slavery like practices. For example, in 1999, UNICEF estimated that more than 25 per cent of children working as domestics in Uruguay were less than 10 years old.²⁹ When young children are living and working in other people's homes without regular contact with their family, they are vulnerable to severe exploitation and forced labour. Non-governmental agencies have estimated that up to three quarters of domestics workers are of African descent.

The NGO Gurises Unidos noted that it had received reports relating to the use of child labour in Tacurimbo and Fray Bentos which did not appear to be isolated cases. The children were said to be working in dangerous conditions clearing forests, allegedly for between 12-14 hours a day and sleeping in the woods.³⁰

The generalised nature of this information indicates how little is currently known about the circumstances in which children are working in Uruguay. The Government needs to define which types of child labour it considers dangerous to the health, safety or morals of children (as required by ILO Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour). Once it has done this it should commission detailed research into the relevant areas of economic activity (e.g. domestic work) and establish effective labour inspection systems to identify children who are involved in the worst forms of child labour.

²⁸ See for example, UNICEF, *El trabajo infantil y adolescente en Uruguay y su impacto sobre la educación - Análisis de la situación en la década pasada y el presente*, UNICEF, Montevideo, January 2003 or José Enrique Fernández and Hugo del los Campos, *Análisis de las políticas y programas sociales en Uruguay: la acción pública para prevenir y combatir el trabajo de niños, niñas y adolescentes*, ILO/IPEC, Lima, 2004.

²⁹ The Protection Project at the John Hopkins University of Advanced International Studies, *Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in the countries of the Americas*, IOM, Chile, 2002, page 36.

³⁰ Interview carried out by Anti-Slavery International, 14 November 2005.

4. Trafficking in people

4.1 Uruguay: a source and destination country for trafficking of people

Individual cases of trafficking for both labour and sexual exploitation have been reported in Uruguay for a number of years, but no substantive research into the issue had been carried out by the beginning of 2006.³¹

As early as 1994 a trafficking case was brought to public attention by a journalist. The Uruguayan woman involved was trafficked to Italy prior to being taken on to her final destination in the Middle East. Since this time, concerns about trafficking of Uruguayan women to the US and Europe (particularly Italy and Spain) have been raised periodically, with traffickers often posing as “employment agencies” and offering to arrange work abroad, but then forcing women into prostitution. UNICEF highlighted the trafficking of adults from Punta del Este to Spain as being a particular problem.³²

In 2004, the Uruguayan police arrested a man in connection with the trafficking of 13 Uruguayan women into prostitution in Italy. In 2005, the IOM in Uruguay were directly involved with two cases of women in their late 20s who were also trafficked to Italy. One of the women had been promised domestic work, but was subsequently forced into prostitution in Milan for a period of four months during which time she became pregnant. Interpol was involved with this case and IOM assisted in the woman’s return to Uruguay and her subsequent reintegration.

Trafficking for labour exploitation has also been reported, including the trafficking of Chinese migrants for work in the countryside in Canelones in early 2004. In January 2005, the

Uruguayan police arrested five people and issued warrants for a further two individuals who were suspected of trafficking Chinese migrants into forced agricultural labour. Four police and immigration officials who were suspected of corruption in relation to this case were also removed from their positions.

In 2001, concerns were raised about Ecuadorian children being trafficked to Uruguay who were then involved in forced begging.³³ In 2005, there were still reports of cases involving Ecuadorian and Colombian children between the ages of 10 and 18 who were brought to Uruguay and worked in the streets selling textiles for four years in very exploitative conditions.³⁴

The existence of child prostitution in Uruguay could encourage both internal and cross border trafficking. There are indications that internal trafficking of children is taking place for prostitution in tourist zones like Costa de Oro, Maldonado, Rocha and Colonia³⁵ and the 2005 US State Department Report on Trafficking notes that two traffickers were convicted for prostituting minors in Uruguay.

4.2 The existing framework for tackling trafficking

Work around trafficking in people is just beginning in Uruguay. At the end of 2005, there was no detailed research into its incidence in Uruguay and an absence of a co-ordinated strategy on trafficking, which included specific prosecution, protection and prevention components.

In 2004, the Crime Prevention Office started a database to track trafficking-related cases. This is a positive measure, but given the low levels

³¹ The IOM has commissioned some research into trafficking of persons for all forms of exploitation in Uruguay and this should be completed by the summer of 2006.

³² Interview with Anti-Slavery International, 14 November 2005.

³³ John Hopkins University of Advanced International Studies, *Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in the countries of the Americas*, IOM, Chile, 2002, page 37.

³⁴ Interview with Anti-Slavery International, 15 November 2005.

³⁵ A. S. Rodolfo Martínez Martínez, *Tráfico de Niños Con Fines de Explotación Sexual*, op. cit., page 15.

of awareness around what constitutes trafficking and the absence of anti-trafficking legislation it may not be very effective in terms of indicating the scale and patterns of trafficking in Uruguay.

Trafficking of adults is not specifically addressed by national legislation, which means that Uruguay is not in compliance with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, despite the fact that it has ratified this international standard.

Uruguay's 2004 law against the sexual exploitation of children does allow for those who traffic children into or out of the country for the purposes of prostitution or sexual exploitation to be punished with a prison sentence of between two and 12 years. However, this does not cover internal trafficking or trafficking for forced labour or services.

The legal framework is therefore inadequate and comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation is urgently needed. In drawing up this legislation, the government should also set up specialised services to assist trafficked people. Current services, such as free telephone lines only provide generalised support to women or children who are being mistreated and it is unlikely that they would be in a position to assist trafficked people.

In September 2005, the IOM held a seminar on the issue which included officials from the departments for human rights, culture and the judiciary. More initiatives like this are needed to train appropriate professionals, along with education programmes to raise awareness of trafficking amongst the general public. The latter is particularly important given the tendency to deny that trafficking and exploitation of children for both sexual and labour purposes could take place in Uruguay.

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Related publications from Anti-Slavery International

The publications listed below can be bought or downloaded from Anti-Slavery International's website at: **www.antislavery.org**

This publication is part of a series of reports that Anti-Slavery International is producing in 2006 on contemporary forms of slavery in Latin America. This series will include country reports on:

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Paraguay
Peru

Maggie Black, *Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2005.

Iveta Bartunkova, *Protocol for the Identification and Assistance of Trafficked Persons*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2005.

Mike Kaye, *The Migration-Trafficking Nexus: Combating trafficking through the protection of migrant's human rights*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2003

Binka Le Breton, *Trapped: Modern-day slavery in the Brazilian Amazon*, LAB, London, 2003.

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, is committed to eliminating all forms of slavery throughout the world. Slavery, servitude and forced labour are violations of individual freedoms, which deny millions of people their basic dignity and fundamental human rights. Anti-Slavery International works to end these abuses by exposing current cases of slavery, campaigning for its eradication, supporting the initiatives of local organisations to release people, and pressing for more effective implementation of international laws against slavery. For further information see: www.antislavery.org

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