

# Anti-Trafficking News Bulletin



## CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION ANNOUNCES MONTHLY ANTI-TRAFFICKING NEWS BULLETIN

Assistant Attorney General R. Alexander Acosta announced today that the Civil Rights Division will publish a monthly *Anti-Trafficking News Bulletin* designed to report news and information on the Justice Department's efforts to eliminate human trafficking. Human trafficking, also referred to as "trafficking in persons," involves the acquisition of human beings through the use of force, fraud, or coercion typically for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labor. According to Assistant Attorney General Acosta, it amounts to nothing less than modern-day slavery. However, there is a "committed and growing community of those who have enlisted in the war on trafficking." "This newsletter is part of a larger effort to encourage and support the exchange of information, announce new developments, and make practical advice available to others on how to effectively combat human trafficking," Acosta affirms.

In 2003, the Department of Justice achieved a record high in its anti-trafficking effort: 82 investigations with 32 defendants charged and 26 convictions or pleadings. Indeed, since 2001 the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division initiated prosecutions of 111 traffickers – nearly a three-fold increase compared to the previous three years.

Prosecutors from the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division have developed expertise in investigating and prosecuting trafficking perpetrators in tandem with pioneering a victim-centered approach that mandates restorative justice for trafficking victims. "Section prosecutors and victim advocacy professionals are in constant demand for training and technical advice, and I want to make their experience available to a wider audience," Acosta states. The *News Bulletin* will stimulate dialogue among the anti-trafficking community as well as promote awareness about the Justice Department's toll-free hotline used for reporting victimization.

## CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION APPOINTS FORMER INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION VICE PRESIDENT, MARCH BELL, AS NEW SENIOR COUNSEL ON TRAFFICKING

Assistant Attorney General R. Alexander Acosta has appointed T. March Bell as *Senior Special Counsel for Trafficking Issues* to provide additional policy leadership on cases that involve trafficking in persons. Bell has served as a trial attorney in the Justice Department's Criminal Division and as General Counsel in the Office of Justice Programs.

Prior to his current position with the government, Bell served as Vice President of Interventions for the International Justice Mission (IJM). In that capacity Bell engineered the design and implementation of law enforcement rescues of sex trafficking victims in the developing world including the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, India, and West Africa. The

rescue program focused on removing victims that were trapped in degrading slavery, ensuring that they were placed with an appropriate aftercare services agency, and working with local counsel, prosecutors and judges to make sure perpetrators were held accountable.

"Although each country has a good statute, no one had ever gathered evidence of sex trafficking crimes or rescued anyone or prosecuted a case," said Bell. Further, unfortunately some law enforcement treated the victims as if they were criminals or were part of the crime itself. Bell deployed a team of investigators to infiltrate brothels with undercover cameras and other tools to obtain evidence that national statutes were being violated. Then the legal team managed by (cont'd on pg. 2)

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### SPECIAL FEATURES

- Press Releases on Acosta's address to the Dominican Republic
- Recent Notable Prosecutions

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Bell took that evidence, hired local counsel, and made sure that prosecutions took place. Bell then advanced the brothel rescue work to the next level: region wide multi-disciplinary task forces designed to impact sex trafficking in a specific geographic region. “Once we trained police and prosecutors, identified secure aftercare providers, and learned how to care for traumatized victims, we expanded the effort to deter trafficking in a specific area. The lessons learned at the village and street level in the developing world provides great insight into how trafficking networks and victim coercion operates in the United States,” says Bell.

## ACOSTA ENCOURAGES “NEXT STEPS” TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC OFFICIALS AT TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

Assistant Attorney General Acosta delivered a keynote address for the December 8, 2003 anti-trafficking conference held in Santo Domingo. At the conference, Shared Hope International and the War Against Trafficking Alliance presented the distinguished “Path Breakers” Award to the Dominican Republic for its current efforts against human trafficking. Acosta congratulated the government of the Dominican Republic on its recently enacted anti-trafficking statute, but also advised that the real work “begins now.” The address came at a critical time because the U.S. Department of State’s June 2003 *Trafficking in Persons Report* previously determined that the Dominican Republic government failed to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and make reasonable efforts to address the problem. Consequently, the report held that the Dominican Republic remains one of the largest victim source countries in the Western Hemi-

sphere. This placed the Dominican Republic on a “Tier Three” level, subjecting the country to risk losing non-humanitarian foreign aid.

In June 2003, the Government of the Dominican Republic was presented with a work plan by the State Department that outlined steps to combat trafficking. Since then, the country has accomplished each of the items in the Department’s work plan, thus demonstrating new “significant efforts.” The core of the plan required the government to address the lack of law enforcement and corruption. On the basis of positive actions, including passage of the new anti-trafficking statute undertaken by the Dominican Republic government since the end of the 2003 reporting period, President Bush ordered that the Dominican Republic be moved up to “Tier Two.”

Acosta, who now heads the United States’ government prosecutorial effort to hold traffickers accountable and rescue trafficking victims, claims that “as government officials

our task should be to meet the needs of these victims and be a voice for them to lessen their suffering. Those who commit human trafficking crimes need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.” In his press interviews in the Dominican Republic, Acosta remarked on the importance of the rule of law. “Vigorous enforcement of laws is critical,” the Assistant Attorney General asserted. Acosta emphasized that passage of the new law is a good start, but the real test will be how many traffickers are arrested and prosecuted in the Dominican Republic. The press interviews in the Dominican Republic can be found on **Page 7**.

The full text of Assistant Attorney General Acosta’s speech in the Dominican Republic is found on **Page 5**.

## RESCUED TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR WHO ASSISTED PROSECUTORS RECEIVES RFK HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

On November 20, 2003, Criminal Section prosecutors along with victim and witness staff were invited to attend a Capitol Hill ceremony where Julia Gabriel, Romeo Ramirez, and Lucas Benitez of the *Coalition of Immokolee Workers* were presented with the 2003 Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Memorial Human Rights Award.

Criminal Section prosecutors Lou de Baca and Leon Rodriguez first met Julia Gabriel during the investigation of US v. Flores, a migrant worker trafficking case. Gabriel bravely testified against her traffickers who are now serving 15 year sentences as a result of her efforts. Since her escape and the incarceration of her traffickers, Gabriel provided critical assistance to young girls and women enslaved in brothels in the sex trafficking case US v. Cadena. In 2001, Romeo Ramirez, a farm worker from Guatemala, infiltrated a migrant labor trafficking

operation and assisted in the escape of four men held in a migrant camp against their will. As a result, the Criminal Section attorneys Adriana Vieco, Andrew Huang, and Daniel Velez successfully prosecuted three perpetrators in US v. Ramos.

Lucas Benitez, a *Coalition* founder, has assisted trafficking victims in a number of the Division’s migrant labor and sex trafficking prosecutions in Central and South Florida. This is the first time in the RFK Human Rights Award’s twenty-year history that it honors persons active in the United States. “It has been great to see Julia progress from a frightened victim to a confident survivor,” says Lou de Baca. “Her strength and her commitment to helping other victims is an inspiration to us in our work.”

**Address of Assistant Attorney General R. Alexander Acosta (English Translation)\***  
**Shared Hope International Luncheon**  
**December 8, 2003**  
**Dominican Republic**

Thank you President Mejia, Attorney General Cespedes, Doña Chabela, Congresswoman Smith, and other distinguished guests. It's a privilege to be back again in the Dominican Republic. I was here just last year to participate in a conference addressing methods of reducing human trafficking in the Dominican Republic. It is an honor to be here again.

Trafficking in persons, also referred to as "human trafficking," involves the acquisition of human beings, through the use or threat of force, fraud, or coercion typically for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Traffickers prey on vulnerable victims in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico and other countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as Asia and Eastern Europe. Although some victims of trafficking are kidnapped or abducted, many others are lured away from their families with false promises of a better life.

Trafficking in persons is nothing less than modern day slavery. It should not be tolerated here in the Dominican Republic, in the United States of America, or anywhere else in the world.

The United States Government has made a clear and unequivocal commitment to combat human trafficking. "Human trafficking," our Attorney General John Ashcroft has declared:

is an affront to human dignity. The Department of Justice is determined not to stand idly by while the toll in human suffering mounts. Human trafficking victims often are too young, too frightened, too trapped in their circumstances to speak for themselves. By setting high standards of conduct for federal officials in meeting the needs of these victims, we hope to be the victims' voice, to lessen the suffering, to prosecute those who commit these crimes to the fullest extent of the law.

The cost to young victims – usually young women – from human trafficking is all too real. In one recent case, four Mexican women – girls as young as 14 years of age – were lured to America with promises of a husband and a better life. Instead, these girls found captivity and forced prostitution at a brothel in Plainfield, New Jersey. They were forced to service man, after man, after man, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They were not given the freedom to leave the brothel and sleep in their own beds. They were physically abused. Two of the leading criminals responsible for this were sentenced to more than 17 years imprisonment in August.

This is only *an* example. Our State Department estimates that thousands of victims are trafficked into the United States each year. These human beings are being brought to our nation to be placed in slavery. Legally and morally we must respond.

And, in the United States, we have responded on a massive scale.

Our efforts have been guided by three priorities: prosecution, protection, and prevention.

**Prosecution.** Since January of 2001, the Department of Justice has prosecuted 111 traffickers — nearly three times the number prosecuted over the prior three year period. The majority of these defendants participated in some form of sexual abuse or assault of female victims. Our conviction rate for these cases is near 100% and our efforts continue: we currently have 141 open trafficking investigations.

To achieve these increases, we have assembled an impressive team. We have, and we continue to, conduct some of the largest ever anti-trafficking training for field-level federal prosecutors and agents. The Justice Department has worked with the State Department and other federal agencies to create the Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Coordination Center. We have assisted in organizing national and local trafficking task forces to help coordinate the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases. Successful trafficking prosecution requires the coordinated effort of federal prosecutors, local law enforcement, and intelligence agencies working together to combat this modern-day evil.

**Assistant Attorney General Acosta's Address—Cont'd from Pg. 3)**

**Protection.** The victims of trafficking are just that. *They are victims.* They deserve care and protection. As soon as victims are discovered, the Department of Justice works with other United States Government agencies to ensure their care and protection. We have worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to certify approximately 450 trafficking victims, allowing them to receive critical federal and state benefits and services. In the short run, these victims receive assistance with housing, clothing, dental and medical care including examinations for sexually transmitted diseases. In the long run, this certification provides victims with the opportunity to obtain employment authorization, housing, and long-term medical care for up to three years.

**Prevention.** Perhaps our most important long-term efforts focus on prevention. We are working to make the American public and the international community more aware of the evil of human trafficking. We are launching a public education campaign to remind Americans that modern-day slavery persists and to educate communities on how to identify and report these incidents. Our toll-free telephone hotline, staffed by operators with access to language translation services, has been most effective and is one of the largest sources of information leading to new investigations. The Department of Justice has also initiated a community outreach program that includes close working relationships with many faith-based organizations. Regional offices of the International Rescue Committee, the YWCA, and the Salvation Army have worked with the Department on trafficking prevention. These local groups know their communities well, and are often aware of the vulnerable individuals that become victims of traffickers.

Since my last visit, the Dominican Republic, like the United States, has taken important steps to combat the modern-day evil of human trafficking. In August of 2003, this Republic adopted a new anti-trafficking law.

The new law addresses prosecutions. It includes a legal definition of trafficking that holds both individuals and organizations accountable. Penalties for individuals may lead to up to fifteen to twenty years' imprisonment as well as significant fines. Penalties for organizations can potentially result in the dissolution of the organization itself. The law criminalizes both aiding in trafficking and attempting to commit trafficking.

Likewise, your new law provides victims protections, including legal representation as well as other support such as housing and medical attention. In addition, the law establishes several important prevention programs.

This law can help combat the scourge of human trafficking both here in the Dominican Republic and abroad. But passage of the law is only a first step. Vigorous enforcement of laws is critical. Here in the Dominican Republic, the government has started down this road of enforcement.

The Dominican Republic government has committed itself to anti-trafficking enforcement by creating anti-trafficking police and prosecution units with support at the highest levels of authority. Results include the recent indictments of a member of Congress on accusations of trafficking-related corruption. Additional steps toward enforcement will include the installation of special prosecutors in each of the nine administrative departments throughout the Republic to better protect and address trafficking.

The Secretariat of Women, along with other social service agencies and the International Organization for Migration, continue to focus on prevention, protection, and education. These efforts include the distribution of printed materials that inform potential victims, particularly young women, of the dangers of trafficking. Continued seminars and public activities, such as an assembly of the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission of Women to address trafficking, are key to disseminating information about trafficking and its prevention. In addition, your work with non-governmental organizations in this education and prevention effort is important.

As result of these efforts, I am glad to join this luncheon today as Shared Hope International and the War Against Trafficking Alliance presents and honors you with their "Path Breakers" Award. The work of individuals such as Congresswoman Linda Smith and organizations like Shared Hope International, along with the efforts of governments throughout the world to combat trafficking, are vital to eliminating this hideous form of modern-day slavery.

President Mejia, Attorney General Cespedes, Doña Chabela, thank you for your work. Congresswoman Smith, I thank you for your critical work here and elsewhere throughout the world. Thank you all for the opportunity to be present as Shared Hope International and the War Against Trafficking Alliance present the Dominican Republic with this distinguished "Path Breakers" award.

**Discurso del Asistente Procurador General de Justicia para Derechos Civiles\***

**R. Alexander Acosta**

**Almuerzo de Shared Hope International**

**8 de diciembre de 2003**

**República Dominicana**

Gracias, Presidente Mejía, Procurador General Céspedes, Doña Chabela, Diputada Smith e invitados distinguidos. Es un privilegio estar de nuevo en la República Dominicana. El año pasado, estuve aquí participando en una conferencia sobre métodos y soluciones para reducir la trata de personas en la República Dominicana. Es un honor estar aquí otra vez.

La trata de personas, también reconocido como “la trata humana,” implica la adquisición de seres humanos, a través del uso o la amenaza de la fuerza, el fraude o la coacción, usualmente con el fin de la explotación sexual y trabajo forzado. Los tratantes abusan de víctimas vulnerables en países como la República Dominicana, México y otros países del Caribe, Centro y Sudamérica, y también Asia y partes de Europa. Aunque algunas víctimas de la trata son raptadas o secuestradas, muchas otras son engañadas y alejadas de sus familias con promesas e ilusiones falsas de una vida mejor.

La trata de personas es nada menos que esclavitud moderna. No se debe tolerar aquí en la República Dominicana, ni en los Estados Unidos, ni en ninguna otra parte del mundo.

El Gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha asumido un compromiso claro e inequívoco de combatir la trata humana. Nuestro Secretario de Justicia, John Ashcroft, ha declarado que la trata humana:

es una afrenta a la dignidad humana. El Departamento de Justicia ha determinado no quedarse quieto mientras el sufrimiento humano aumenta. Las víctimas de la trata humana muchas veces son muy jóvenes y están muy asustadas para hablar por ellas mismas. Nosotros en el Departamento de Justicia esperamos ser una voz para las víctimas, reducir su sufrimiento, y enjuiciar a las personas que cometen estos delitos con la medida máxima permitida por la ley.

El costo humano de la trata es muy real. En un caso reciente, cuatro mujeres mexicanas—en si niñas de apenas 14 años de edad—fueron engañadas con promesas falsas de un esposo y una vida mejor en Norteamérica. En vez, las jóvenes encontraron captividad y la prostitución forzada en un prostíbulo en Plainfield, Nueva Jersey. Se les obligó atender hombre, tras hombre, tras hombre, las 24 horas del día, 7 días a la semana. Ni siquiera se les permitía salir del prostíbulo, ni dormir en sus propias camas. Las víctimas fueron abusadas físicamente para hacerlas cumplir con las reglas del prostíbulo. Nosotros encarcelamos dos de los tratantes responsables hace unos meses por más de 17 años.

Este es solo *un* ejemplo. Nuestro Departamento de Estado estima que miles de víctimas de la trata son introducidas a los Estados Unidos cada año. Estos seres humanos son traídos a nuestro país para ser atrapados en la esclavitud. Legal y moralmente, tenemos que responder.

Y, en los Estados Unidos, hemos respondido a escala masiva.

Nuestros esfuerzos han sido guiados por tres prioridades: el enjuiciamiento, la protección, y la prevención.

**Enjuiciamiento.** Desde enero del 2001, el Departamento de Justicia ha enjuiciado a 111 tratantes—casi tres veces mas del número que se enjuició durante los últimos tres años. La mayoría de los acusados, tomaron parte en alguna forma de abuso o agresión sexual de mujeres víctimas. Nuestro índice de condenas para estos casos es casi 100%. Y nuestros esfuerzos continúan hoy día: actualmente tenemos 141 investigaciones sobre la trata.

Para lograr estos aumentos, hemos reunido un equipo impresionante. Hemos realizado, y seguimos llevando a cabo, uno de los entrenamientos más extensos jamás para fiscales y agentes federales. Hemos, con el apoyo local, organizado fuerzas para coordinar investigaciones y enjuiciamientos. El éxito del enjuiciamiento de la trata requiere un esfuerzo coordinado entre enjuiciamientos federales, agencias de inteligencia, y organismos policiales y judiciales. Estas instituciones deben trabajar conjuntamente para combatir este mal de nuestros tiempos.



**Discurso del Asistente Procurador General Acosta —Cont'd from Pg. 5**

**Protección.** Las víctimas de trata son justamente eso. *Son víctimas*. Y merecen cuidado y protección. Tan pronto como se descubre que hay víctimas, el Departamento de Justicia trabaja con otras agencias del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos para asegurar su cuidado y protección. Hemos trabajado con el Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos para certificar casi 450 víctimas de trata para recibir beneficios críticos y servicios federales y estatales. A corto plazo, estas víctimas reciben ayuda con la vivienda, ropa, atención médica y dental, incluyendo exámenes contra enfermedades sexualmente transmitidas. A largo plazo, estas víctimas reciben la oportunidad de obtener autorización de empleo, vivienda, y atención médica hasta por tres años.

**Prevención.** A largo plazo, quizás los esfuerzos más importantes son los de la prevención. Trabajamos para educar al público americano y la comunidad internacional acerca de este mal. Estamos lanzando una campaña de educación pública para recordarle a la población americana que la esclavitud persiste hoy en día. Y estamos trabajando para educar las comunidades a identificar y denunciar estos incidentes. Nuestra línea telefónica gratuita—atendida por operadoras con acceso a servicios de traducción de idiomas—ha sido muy eficaz, y es una de las mayores fuentes de información que resulta en nuevas investigaciones. El Departamento de Justicia también ha iniciado un programa de trabajar con organizaciones religiosas. Las oficinas regionales del Comité Internacional de Rescate, el YWCA, y el Ejército de Salvación han trabajado con el Departamento en la prevención de la trata. Estos grupos locales conocen bien a sus comunidades y saben cuáles son las personas vulnerables que llegan a ser las víctimas de los tratantes.

La República Dominicana, como los Estados Unidos, ha tomado pasos importantes para combatir la injusticia que es la trata humana. En agosto del 2003, esta República adoptó una nueva ley contra la trata.

La nueva ley aborda los enjuiciamientos. Incluye una definición legal de trata que hace responsables tanto a individuales como a organizaciones. Las sanciones para los delitos de trata pueden ser de quince a veinte años de encarcelamiento, y incluyen multas significativas. Las sanciones para organizaciones pueden incluir la disolución de la organización misma. La ley criminaliza tanto la asistencia a la trata como el intento de cometer este delito.

Su nueva ley también les proporciona protección a las víctimas, incluyendo la representación legal, y otros medios de apoyo, como vivienda y atención médica. La ley también establece varios programas importantes de prevención.

Esta ley puede ayudar a combatir el mal que es la trata humana, tanto aquí en la República Dominicana como en el exterior. Pero la promulgación de la ley es solo un primer paso. Es de importancia crítica la aplicación vigorosa de las leyes. Y el gobierno de la República Dominicana ha tomado la iniciativa de aplicar estas leyes.

El gobierno Dominicano se ha comprometido a aplicar las leyes contra la trata, creando con apoyo político a los niveles mas altos, fuerzas policíacas y unidades de enjuiciamiento. Los resultados incluyen importantes procesamientos recientes con respecto a acusaciones de corrupción relacionadas a este mal. Medidas adicionales de aplicación de la ley incluirán la instalación de fiscales especiales en cada uno de los nuevos departamentos administrativos en toda la república para brindar mejor protección y abordar la trata.

La Secretaría de la Mujer, junto con otras agencias de servicios sociales, así también como la Organización Internacional para la Migración, sigue concentrándose en la prevención, la protección, y la educación. Sus esfuerzos incluyen la distribución de materiales impresos para informar las víctimas potenciales, sobre todo a mujeres jóvenes, los peligros de la trata. Seminarios y actividades públicas en marcha, tales como una asamblea de la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres de la Organización de Estados Americanos, son de importancia fundamental para difundir información acerca de la trata y su prevención. Y por supuesto, es muy importante sus trabajos con organizaciones no gubernamentales en este esfuerzo de educación y prevención.

Como resultado de estos esfuerzos, me complace estar aquí en este almuerzo hoy donde Shared Hope International y War Against Trafficking Alliance le entrega a ustedes el Premio Path Breakers. El trabajo de individuos como la Diputada Linda Smith y las organizaciones tales como Shared Hoped International, junto con los esfuerzos de gobiernos alrededor del mundo, es esencial para eliminar esta forma repugnante de esclavitud de nuestros tiempos modernos.

Presidente Mejía, Procurador General Céspedes, Doña Chabela, muchísimas gracias por su trabajo. Y, Diputada Smith, le agradezco su trabajo critico aquí en la República y en otras países alrededor del mundo. Gracias a todos por brindarme la oportunidad de estar presente en la entrega del premio Path Breakers por Shared Hope International y War Against Trafficking Alliance en la República Dominicana.



## PRESS RELEASES

### FUNCIONARIO DE ESTADOS UNIDOS PIDE APLICACIÓN RIGUROSA DE LEY- HOY

Alex Acosta, asistente del Procurador General para la División de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos, dijo que el país dio un primer paso para combatir la trata y tráfico humano con la aprobación de una ley para combatir el crimen, pero necesita además de una "aplicación vigorosa".

El funcionario estadounidense también se refirió al caso del diputado Radhamés Ramos García, y aseguró que la ley es la ley y cualquier individuo que cometa un delito debe ser enjuiciado.

"La ley es la ley y si una persona comete un delito sea quien sea, se tiene que enjuiciar a ese individuo. La capacidad del actuar en esa forma es un importante indicador de reforzamiento de las leyes", afirmó Acosta.

Expresó que en el aspecto de trata humana y abuso sexual el problema de República Dominicana "es complicado" porque no solamente es un país donde vienen personas que están en la trata sino que hay personas que las traen de Haití y las ponen en labores forzadas en esclavitud.

Dijo que en los Estados Unidos se aprobó una ley nueva que establece que cualquier ciudadano estadounidense que vaya a cualquier país para participar en turismo sexual, se puede enjuiciar cuando regrese.

Destacó que tanto la cámara de Diputados como el Senado aprobaron en tiempo record esa ley. "El próximo paso es aplicar la ley vigorosamente y parece que Dominicana se ha comprometido a cumplir la ley", dijo.

Destacó que la República Dominicana ha mejorado de un nivel 3 a un nivel 2, en el Reporte Anual sobre Tráfico de Personas (reporte TIP) publicado por el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos.

"Ese cambio de nivel reconoce que la República Dominicana ha tomado los primeros pasos para resolver el problema al aprobar la ley contra la

trata", dijo.

Tanto Haití, Belice y República Dominicana han subido a nivel dos.

Valoró la creación de dos unidades especiales en la Procuraduría General de la República para combatir la trata.

Dijo que alrededor de 20,000 personas están siendo introducidos en los Estados Unidos de América ilegalmente. "En mi propia oficina he enjuiciado en los últimos años 111 individuos y es triple el nivel que en los años anteriores. Tenemos 141 investigaciones abiertas", explicó.

Agregó que el Departamento de Justicia ha trabajado con el Departamento de Estado y otras agencias federales para crear el Centro de Coordinación contra el Contrabando de Emigrantes y Trata de personas.

Precisó que la mejor forma de prevención es unir los esfuerzos mundiales para prevenir la trata de blancas y por eso se tiene una lista del Departamento de Estado para valorar los esfuerzos de países contra la trata de humanos.

Dijo que la fuente de información de que se nutre el Departamento de Estado, es en base a los reportes de las embajadas de los diferentes países, organizaciones no gubernamentales y otras de la sociedad civil.

#### Página de Internet:

[http://www.hoy.com.do/\(qda4vaqxr2rdzg55nqwjg245\)/aspx/article.aspx?id=1480](http://www.hoy.com.do/(qda4vaqxr2rdzg55nqwjg245)/aspx/article.aspx?id=1480)

### QUE SE DICE - OPINION DE HOY

Es verdad que por ser como somos, tan especiales, hemos llegado a perder la capacidad de asombro, pero eso no quiere decir que hayamos perdido también la capacidad de avergonzarnos. Por lo menos la vergüenza que deberíamos sentir cada vez que alguien viene de allende los mares a echarnos en cara nuestras insuficiencias institucionales, para usar un eufemismo piadoso, como ha sido el caso del asistente del Procurador General de la División de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Justicia de los Estados

Unidos. Según el señor Alex Acosta, República Dominicana ha dado un significativo paso de avance en sus esfuerzos por combatir la trata y el tráfico de personas con la creación de una ley para combatir ese crimen, pero hace falta, a su juicio, que esa ley se aplique de manera vigorosa. Tal vez por eso, cuando se le planteó al funcionario el caso del diputado Radhamés Ramos García -acusado de tráfico de chinos a través de la frontera con Haití- su respuesta fue tan espontánea, clara y precisa que hasta un niño hubiera sido capaz de entenderla: "la ley es la ley y si una persona comete un delito, sea quien sea, se tiene que enjuiciar a ese individuo".

#### Traducción

Según revela un informe del Banco Central, correspondiente al período enero-septiembre del 2003, los indicadores muestran que la economía dominicana atraviesa por un ciclo recesivo caracterizado por la caída del Producto Interno Bruto (PIB), el aumento de los niveles de inflación y un entorno internacional desfavorable. En ese período, señala el documento, la economía experimentó una disminución de 1.0% con respecto a igual período del año anterior, a lo que se añade una inflación acumulada del 33% debido, fundamentalmente, al proceso de depreciación del tipo de cambio experimentado por la economía en los últimos tres meses. Lo que toda esa jerga económica nos quiere decir, traducido al español dominicano, es que el país está total y definitivamente en olla, y que aquellos que han tenido la suerte o la desgracia de nacer bajo su hermoso cielo insular estamos bastante feos para la foto.

#### Recordando una promesa

Probablemente hayamos perdido la cuenta de los fiscales separados de sus cargos por cometer irregularidades durante el desempeño de sus funciones (en la gestión del doctor Virgilio Bello Rosa fueron cancelados más de cincuenta), a propósito del anuncio del procurador general de la Corte de Apelación del Distrito Nacional, el doctor Rafael Mejía Guerrero, de que estudia siete querrelas interpuestas contra igual número de (cont'd on Pg. 8)

## Press Releases—Cont'd from Pg. 7

aydantes fiscales. El procurador general de la República, el doctor Víctor Céspedes Martínez, prometió el pasado mes de julio, por lo menos así está publicado en los periódicos, que iniciaría un amplio programa de evaluación de todos los representantes del Ministerio Público en el país, y que aquellos que reprobaren los exámenes que impartirá el Consejo de Procuradores serán separados de sus cargos. Esperamos que se hayan iniciado esas prometidas evaluaciones, que se ha comprobado, hasta la saciedad, que no solo son necesarias sino también urgentes.

### Página de Internet:

[http://www.hoy.com.do/\(qda4vaqxr2rdzg55nqwjg245\)/aspx/article.aspx?id=1480](http://www.hoy.com.do/(qda4vaqxr2rdzg55nqwjg245)/aspx/article.aspx?id=1480)

## HOTLINE ESTABLISHES LINK BETWEEN VICTIMS AND JUSTICE

Over one half of the Criminal Section trafficking-related investigations are initiated through a toll-free **Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Complaint Line** (TPWETF) currently operated by the Department of Justice. The TPWETF toll free number is 1-888-428-7581.



**1-888-428-7581**

Recently, for example, the TPWETF was contacted to relay allegations from a concerned relative that a female domestic worker had been held captive in the home of suspected traffickers for approximately twelve years. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Criminal Section prosecutors, working with service providers, raided the home of the traffickers and liberated the woman. She now receives victim services under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and has

been reunited with family members as the investigation continues. Shortly after receiving another recent call to the TPWETF, agents and Criminal Section prosecutors interviewed a sex trafficking victim and pursued TVPA victim services within less than a week of the call.

The Division has pursued a number of outreach opportunities to advise federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies (as well as services providers and others who may come into contact with trafficking victims) of the effectiveness of the TPWETF for reporting alleged abuses. When informed in advance of a media program about human trafficking, the Division will staff the TPWETF beyond the normal hours of operation. The Division is working with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on outreach efforts which will increase opportunities for victims and their advocates to come forward.

## RECENT NOTABLE PROSECUTIONS

### United States v. Martinez-Uresti and DeHoyos

On October 10, 2003, Federal prosecutors obtained guilty pleas from Maricela Martinez-Uresti and Violeta Juanita De-Hoyos-Hernandez in the Western Division of Texas. The two defendants had been charged with conspiring to smuggle, transport and harbor aliens, importation of aliens for immoral purposes, sex trafficking of children, and transportation of minors for sexual activity. Both defendants were sentenced in December 2003. Martinez-Uresti was sentenced to 108 months in prison. De-Hoyos-Hernandez was sentenced to time served, or 7 months incarceration. She was also ordered to be deported.

Beginning in November 2002 and continuing through May 2003, the defendants participated in a conspiracy to recruit and smuggle minor female aliens from Mexico to the United States for financial gain. The defendants reached agreements with the parents of the minors by falsely promising to smuggle the girls into the United States in exchange for \$1,500 and the promise that the girls would work in the defendants' restaurant for one year. However, once the girls reached Austin, there was no restaurant. The girls were instead held against their will and forced to engage in sexual acts. The defendants further terrorized the girls by threatening to kill them if they refused to follow instructions.

### U.S. v Jimenez-Calderon & U.S. v. Burgos

On October 21, 2003, defendant Pedro Burgos was sentenced to 96 months for his involvement in a sex trafficking ring in New Jersey. He is one of six defendants prosecutors from the Civil Rights Division and the District of New Jersey have convicted on trafficking and related charges. The defendants engaged in a pattern of luring young Mexican women and girls into the United States under false pretenses, forcing them to engage in sexual acts, and holding them through physical violence and threats.



On August 7, 2003, ringleaders Librada Jimenez-Calderon and Antonia Jimenez-Calderon pleaded guilty to conspiracy and sex trafficking charges. On August 7, 2003, they were sentenced to over 17 years incarceration for their guilty pleas to conspiracy and sex trafficking charges. Angel Ruiz also pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 44 months in prison on sex trafficking charges. Additionally, Sergio Farfan, after a guilty plea, was sentenced to 16 months in prison for his guilty plea to conspiring to (cont'd on Pg. 9)



**Recent Notable Prosecutions—Cont'd from Pg. 8**

obstruct justice. Defendant Maritzana Diaz Lopez is still awaiting sentencing.

The case is an excellent example of federal/state cooperation that characterizes the Division's anti-trafficking approach. Local officers initiated a vice investigation that uncovered a brothel connected to the trafficking ring and quickly notified federal authorities. The joint investigation, led by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, liberated several vulnerable young women. Working closely with non-government agencies, agents and prosecutors were able to ensure the safety of the traumatized victims and secure justice in this egregious case.

**RETIRING ICE AGENT WILL BE MISSED**

Senior Special Agent Richard Serra of the McAllen office of the Bureau of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is retiring this month. Agent Serra has been with the agency (formerly INS) since 1974. As a member of his office's anti-smuggling unit, Agent Serra has investigated trafficking cases and other matters involving the abuse and exploitation of immigrants. Agent Serra was the lead case agent in U.S. v. Soto, in which seven men were convicted of holding female aliens in sexual slavery in alien smuggling "safehouses" in South Texas. The convicted men held women against their will and forced them to cook, clean, and submit to repeated rapes at the hands of the smugglers. In March 2003, Agent Serra personally liberated two women from the trailers in which they were being held. He led his multi-agency investigative team from ICE, FBI, and the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office to bring the case under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) approach, working with local non-governmental organizations to get services and shelter for the victims even as he searched for the rest of the traffickers. Serra worked closely with prosecutors from the Criminal Section and the local U.S. Attorney's Office to gather crucial evidence that resulted in guilty pleas by all of the defendants. The victims are safe and receiving help from HHS/OVC grantees in other states. Sentencing is set for late January 2004. In brief, Agent Serra truly exemplifies the blend of compassion, cooperation, and toughness that characterizes the U.S. Government's anti-trafficking efforts. The Civil Rights Division wishes him the very best in his retirement.