Stop the Traffik

Human trafficking is forcing, tricking or threatening people to work for little or no pay. The person cannot leave, even if they want to.

Read one of the 'Stop the Traffik' stories, each one is true. How does it make you feel?

If you would like to, write a prayer or thought onto one of the paper strips and add your link to the chain.

‘Stop the Traffik’
Brahima & Siaka, Africa

Brahima and Siaka met two years ago in the little bus station in Sikasso, Mali, where slave traders wait. Siaka was 14 and Brahima was just turning 12. A "locateur" offered them work as welders or carpenters. Neither boy had any experience at those trades, but the locateur said his "big brother" in Ivory Coast would pay them each about $170 a year. He offered to take them there for free.

What happened? The two boys were taken with thirteen others in two white mini-buses with two men in each vehicle. "The locateur told us that if were stopped by police, we should tell them that he was our elder brother" said Siaka. When they neared the border, the boys were ordered to get out and take motorcycle taxis. They continued on a back road and slipped into Ivory Coast undetected. "I was suspicious, but I was also scared," said Brahima. "We were already across and I didn't know how I could run away. I had no money". Dote Coulibaly was waiting in Korhogo. He needed two boys to work on this cocoa and coffee farm. Coulibaly said he bought Brahima and Siaka for $28 each. Two days later they found themselves on his farm. "He told us we would work only in the cocoa and coffee fields," said Brahima, "but there were also cotton, yam, corn and rice fields. When you finish one field, you go to another and another."

Brahima has been enslaved on Coulibaly's farm nearly two years. He shares a windowless mud hut with Siaka, and he doesn't ask much from life. Siaka seldom thinks of trying to escape. When Siaka tried to flee last year, Coulibaly beat him.

‘Stop the Traffik’
Mary, Mexico

Mary is 19 years old, from a small town in Mexico. She lives with her family – parents, grandmother, brothers and sisters. The house is a little cramped and noisy but Mary loves it. Along with her mum, dad and 2 of her brothers, Mary has to work long hours each day to help provide for her family. Wages aren’t very high so it takes a lot to keep the family provided for. When Mary was at school she used to dream of going to America to work. One day a man came to the village. He was recruiting young men and women to work as waitresses, waiters and cleaners in a hotel his family had set up in America. Mary couldn’t believe her luck – at last the opportunity to go to America!

What happened? Mary was trafficked into America where she was verbally and physically abused by her trafficker. She was forced to work in a factory where she packaged vegetables, but was never paid for employment. Mary was not allowed to leave the apartment in which she was staying unless she was going to work and her trafficker kept feeding her a white powder – later determined to be cocaine – to keep her submissive to him. The trafficker constantly threatened her to stop her running away. One of the abuses was the source of her son’s conception. Mary had previously had a miscarriage due to her abuse but she was not allowed to seek medical attention. Mary is now staying in a Salvation Army domestic violence shelter with her 11 month old son.

‘Stop the Traffik’
Nazia, India

Nazia was born into a family in a north Indian Village. Her family were extremely poor and there was very little opportunity for employment within the village, Nazia’s family didn’t own land so they couldn’t grow food for the family or sell anything at the market to raise money. When Nazia was 13 year old, a man arrived in the village and approached the family; he was in his sixties and he lived in England. The man asked Nazi’s father if he would give Nazia’s younger sister’s hand in marriage. The father refused because she was only ten years old. Not happy with the response, the man ordered his ‘bodyguards’ to beat her father and brother who were very badly hurt and asked for Nazia’s hand in marriage. In exchange for his bride, the man offered Nazia a comfortable place to live in England and money so the family could buy food.

What happened? After more threats and abuse, Nazia’s father finally allowed the man take to take her for his bride. The man paid around £50 for her. Nazia was brought to England by this man, where she was made to undertake domestic chores every day. She was treated as a slave and was made to feel as through her life was not worth anything. She was abused by various men, which eventually led her to becoming pregnant. Once Nazia realised that she was pregnant she knew she could not expose her child to a life of slavery. She ran away from her abuser and escaped to London to find support and a better way of life for her and her child.

‘Stop the Traffik’
Sergy, Russia

Sergy is 13 years old, from a small village outside Moscow in Russia. His father died when he was young and Sergy does not remember him. Sergy has three brothers and one sister. His mum has to work incredibly long hours to support her family whilst juggling housework and caring for five children. In the area they live, there are lots of problems with the economy and severe poverty. Sergy and his family don't have much and often struggle just to buy enough food. One of Sergy's neighbours came to visit the family one evening. She knew about the problems the family were having but said she had a solution. She suggested Sergy go to the UK, and get a job - which would pay more than he could ever imagine - and send money back home. Sergy thought this was a great idea but his mum was not so sure. The neighbour assured them that he would be safe, she would travel with him and introduce him to some people she knew in England who would be able to give him a job.

What happened? When Sergy arrived in the UK, his neighbour sold him to two men who took him to a house where six boys were kept. They beat him heavily until Sergy no longer had strength to fight back. Sergy was sent out on the streets each day to beg. Whatever money he made, the two men would take away from him. If he did not make enough money during the day he would be beaten again in the evening. Sergy was never paid.