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ASIA/THAILAND - Appeal to the Government for Valentine's Day: it is urgent to stop prostitution

Bangkok (Agenzia Fides) - Prostitution is a widespread evil in society, governed by businessmen, government officials and politicians networks; radical measures are urgently needed to stop the thriving illegal sex industry in Thailand: it is an appeal to the Government, on the the occasion of the feast of St. Valentine, on behalf of the party "Rak Prathet Thai " ("Love Thailand") and shared by civil society groups in the country. "The sex industry has an annual turnover of 200 billion baht (6.4 billion dollars), equivalent to almost 10% percent of the country's national budget", said Chuwit Kamolvisit, leader of the Party, and former owner of a chain of massage Institutes. The appeal, which Fides received, urges the government of Yingluck Shinawatra to take action against human trafficking, which involves a million women exploited, of whom 100 thousand children under 18 years of age, in the name of a "false idea of love".
Several NGOs operating in the Thai society have collected examples of video clips on CD, showing patrons openly negotiating prices with potential customers of prostitutes, often tourists, as well as women in skimpy outfits for clients looking for sex in vast areas of the capital. Prostitution, the groups note, is often hidden in massage parlors, bars and nightclubs.
The phenomenon is also triggered by prejudice and discrimination toward women, who have no respect and protection of their dignity: this is confirmed, as reported to Fides, by the results of a survey carried out by the Center for Research and Training on Women's Health, at the University of Khon Kaen, with the support of the Ministry for Social Development. The Center has interviewed over 3,000 women who got pregnant when they were teenagers. 70% of those interviewed said that pregnancies were not planned and had to leave school because of pregnancy, finding themselves so often to suffer exploitation and conditions of virtual slavery toearn a living.
(PA) (Agenzia Fides 13/2/2012)

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