



## **ASIA/YEMEN - The tragedy of women bought, sold, sexually abused**

Aden (Agenzia Fides) - The phenomenon of human trafficking continues to rise and poverty causes the sexual exploitation of women who are the most vulnerable group in Yemen. They are bought and sold throughout the country, raped and beaten to death. "Between 2011 and 2012 there was a significant increase in traffic, smuggling and in cases of violence among immigrant women in the country," is what is read in the latest data of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR) that in 2011 registered over 103 000 new arrivals. There are no reliable figures for 2012 and are believed to be much higher. Migrant women, mainly Ethiopian and Somali, try to escape poverty in the country of origin and their families. They pay hundreds of dollars to get to the crossing points of Djibouti and Puntland, venturing even day trips aboard overcrowded and dangerous boats with the goal of reaching the Gulf states where one can find a job. During the trip they are often raped, suffocated by the overcrowding situation, thrown overboard by the smugglers or even taken hostage by traffickers after reaching Yemen. According to the Desperate Choices report, carried out by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), criminal networks extended throughout Ethiopia, Yemen, Djibouti and Saudi Arabia. Local women are victims of trafficking, but not all of those abused in Yemen are migrants. Sex tourism contributes to the worsening of this phenomenon that involves young Yemeni girls from poor families who are forced to marry visitors from the Gulf states, and after having abused these young victims they abandon them on the street. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 11/01/2013)