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AFRICA/SIERRA LEONE - Human trafficking causes thousands of street children

Freetown (Agenzia Fides) - One of the main reasons why many young people live on the streets in Sierra Leone is trafficking. After being mistreated, abused, many have no choice but to flee. Thousands find themselves living on the streets after their parents entrust them to acquaintances under the promise to give them a good education. Some traffickers are the same family members, others are strangers or friends. They go to the villages and are asked to give their children, they are promised a better life in the city and education. Unfortunately, after being brought to the city, instead of fulfilling their promise they force them to work, force them into prostitution or use them for rituals. Despite the great strides made after the end of the civil war in 2002, the West African Country continues to be one of the least developed countries in the world, where many rural families are not in a position either to assist or to educate their children. According to a study carried out in 2010, approximately 2,500 children sleep each night in the streets of Freetown. There are plenty of crimes against these children. Only a few non-governmental organizations are committed to reducing this serious phenomenon in Sierra Leone and to bring together the victims of their families. One of these is Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (Faast) that is responsible for creating awareness about the problem and to integrate the issue in training programmes of the police force. The NGO has recently opened a shelter for young victims of trafficking. Even the Don Bosco Fambul has opened various shelters and supports several programs for the young homeless. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 11/06/2013)

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