



AMERICA/HONDURAS - Sexual abuse and prostitution per 3000 girls between 12 to 17 years of age

San Pedro Sula (Agenzia Fides) - On the streets of San Pedro Sula, second city in Honduras after the capital Tegucigalpa, one can see boys and girls who wander adrift in filth and total depravity. 10% have a house, where they only go at night, while others sleep on the cold pavement of the streets. A recent study on the alarm regarding the situation of street children forced to work without protection was launched by the Instituto Hondureño de la Niñez y la Familia (Ihnfa). 20% are likely to join criminal gangs for their illegal activities, and 5 out of 10 peddle drugs. The figures are alarming. According to Ihnfa, in San Pedro Sula there are approximately 5000 children living on the streets. Of these, about 3000 are girls aged between 12 to 17 who are forced into prostitution. 20% of street children are illiterate and 79% do not attend school, as opposed to 0.5% , who are able to complete primary school. Some come from marginalized areas, others from the suburbs. In addition to being victims of sexual abuse, they are forced to beg or wash windows. Young children decide to flee their homes to avoid being ill-treated by the same family, or because their parents abandon them. At the psychological care center in Catrachos al Cambio, a professional helps children to overcome their crisis, and declares that the majority of street children who arrive and undergo treatment recovery do not want to talk about their lives as a result of trauma suffered. In the Honduran city 415 children are in rehabilitation centers, and Christian NGOs. However, they are not enough to save them from the violence of the streets. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 13/01/2014)