

GUIDELINES FOR RESCUING TRAFFICKED COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS (CSWs)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Home and Urban Missions (HUM) was established in 2019 under the Church of Pentecost's Vision 2023, led by Apostle Eric Nyamekye. The Church's five-year vision, "Possessing the Nations" (2018–2023), emphasized reaching out to often-neglected groups, including foreigners, the urban poor and marginalized (such as drug addicts, street children, head porters, commercial sex workers, and the homeless), migrants from other African countries, and unreached people groups.

HUM's mission is to win and disciple marginalized, unreached, and unengaged people in Ghana with the unadulterated Word of God—giving them hope and transforming them into agents of positive change in their communities. While progress has been made over the past six years, there is still much work to be done, especially in our efforts to win commercial sex workers and establish them in Christ.

1.1 COMMERCIAL SEX WORK IN GHANA

The terms "sex work" or "prostitution" is often used interchangeably. In some regions, such as parts of Europe, sex work is seen as an industry involving individuals who engage in sexual acts or sexually-oriented services, including strippers, telephone sex operators, sex workers, and pimps. In Ghana, however, sex is criminalized and the criminal Code of 1960 (Act 29) says selling sex is when someone offers their body for sexual acts for money, even if it is not regular sex. Despite its criminalization, the practice persists across the country.

Commercial sex work in Ghana encompasses various forms, including street-based prostitution, brothel-based services, escorts services, and sex conducted in bars and

hotels. Other forms of sex work are lap dancing, massage parlour, survival sex, transactional sex, and even military-related sex work.

Ghana serves as both a source and destination for human trafficking related to prostitution. Women and girls from countries such as Vietnam, China, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Togo have been trafficked into Ghana for sex work.¹ Child prostitution is also a growing issue, particularly in areas such as Accra, Tarkwa, Bogoso, parts of the Volta Region, and mining (galamsey) sites.² These worrying trends calls for more intentional approach to curb this old trade in our nation. Hence, the clarion on members of the Church of Pentecost to support in this heavenly calling in saving many involved in it.

1.2 PREVALENCE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Approximately 60,000 females are engaged in commercial sex work according to reports³. A significant proportion of the female sex workers (FSW) begin sex work before 25 years. However, the median age is about 20 years.⁴ About 85% of the (FSW) enter the trade due to financial needs for themselves and their families⁵. Others are for acceptance among their peers and share desire to be rich-quick.

The National HIV prevalence among (FSW) is estimated at 4.6%, which is significantly higher than the general population's rate of 1.66%.⁶ A health science report in 2023

¹ US Department of State, 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2010', Country narratives: Countries G through M, (Accessed 14th April 2025). <https://www.state.gov/report>

² US Department of state, 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2010'

³ C, Guure, S. Dery, K. Torpey et al. "National and Subnational size estimation of female sex workers in Ghana 2020: comparing 3-source capture-recapture with other approaches" <https://ugspace.ug.gh/> (accessed 15th April 2025)

⁴ International organization for Migration (IOM)- Ghana, "HIV Vulnerability among Female Sex Workers in Ghana:IOM Study" April 2013, (Accessed 14th April 2025 on <https://www.iom.int/news/>)

⁵ International organization for Migration (IOM)- Ghana,

⁶ Alex Ababio, "*Transcending Taboos and illegality: Pioneering inclusivity in Ghana's HIV Solution through Legalized Commercial Sex Work*" in Ghanaian watch, <http://www.ghanaianwatch.com> (accessed, 14th April 2025),

indicates that, approximately 10.1% of FSW reported experiences of physical abuse with clients in the previous year while 24.8% reported sexual violence.⁷

Sex workers in Ghana experience systematic labour exploitation, including some of its worst form: deception; indebtedness; treats; seizure of belongings (Money, passports, phones, ID cards etc), non-payments for services, and pervasive economic coercion.⁸

1.3 HUM RESPONSE AND PROPOSED GUIDELINES

As part of HUM's mission to transform lives with the Gospel, our focus includes winning, rescuing and discipling trafficked commercial sex workers and help them reintegrated into the society.

The following guidelines are proposed for reuniting them with their families, either within Ghana or abroad:

1. Preliminary Steps

- Create a personal file for each rescued sex worker.
- Ensure the individual has genuinely accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
- Facilitate water baptism where possible.
- Conduct a special prayer and counselling sessions to address spiritual and emotional needs. Most of them are forced to perform rituals and have had multiple sexual encounters.
- Enrol her in a New Converts Class covering key topics such as assurance of salvation, sin, overcoming sin, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This may take few days to a week.
- Ensure mature female Christians handle such people and not the males. Male Christians could help but not without the active involvement of female believers.

2. Confidentiality and Dignity

⁷ P. Ayamah, J. Moses Aheto, et al. "Multiple indicators of violence against female sex workers and its associated factors in Ghana: Evidence from the 2015 integrated bio-behavioural surveillance survey cross-sectional study", *health Science report*, 2023 May 4; 6(5): e11243.doi

⁸ Ayamah, J. Moses Aheto, et al.

- Keep the individual's identity private—even from the wider church. Only key leaders should be informed where necessary.
- Avoid public discussions or announcements regarding her past, departure or reasons for coming to the church.

3. Data Collection

Collect detailed personal information, including:

- Full name, age, sex, contact number
- Country of origin, hometown, and city
- Religion and denomination
- Marital status, number of children, and the care givers of their children if they have kids.
- Parents' names, contacts, and current residence
- Guardian or relative's contact if parents are not present
- Circumstances of her arrival in Ghana and current state (residence, handler's name/contact, others involved in the trade)

4. Assess Willingness and Background

- Confirm her willingness to reunite with family (some may refuse or return to Ghana after being sent home).
- Investigate whether she was coerced or trafficked.
- Ask about initial gifts or provisions from the traffickers (e.g., clothing, money).
- Identify any rituals or oaths she underwent.
- Inquire whether she took (stole) any item before leaving her trafficker's location.
- Contact the HUM head office as you make arrangements to send her to her relatives, home country or involve law enforcement.

REPATRIATION PROCESS

- Pray with her and emotionally prepare her for departure.

- Confirm the destination city or country and where possible make contacts in the home country.
- Communicate with her family—verify contacts and confirm availability to receive her.
- Reach out to the Church of Pentecost in her home country to continue her discipleship and follow-up before her departure.
- Build trust so she feels safe sharing crucial information.
- Liaise with the national HUM office for any assistance in any of the process during repatriation.

CONCLUSION

HUM seeks to use the following approaches to help our converts and gather enough data as we make efforts to use the various available interventions to educate the public and partner with law enforcement agencies to curb the sex trade in our country. We are focused on prevention, rescue and rehabilitation, re-integration and justice.

It is our hope to communicate the love of God, restore hope and bring justice to our innocent or perverse victims.

