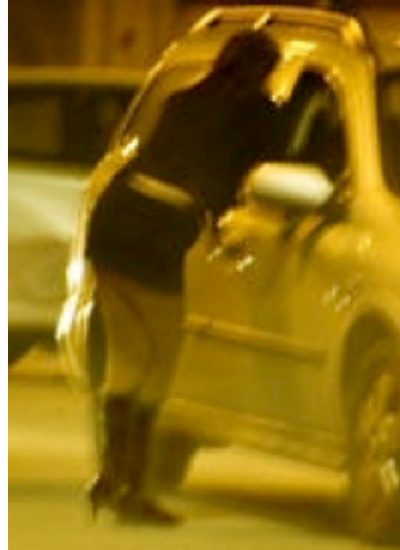




WikiLeaks: Foster Care Children in Ireland Used as Sex Slaves

For at least the past few years, children in Ireland's government-run foster-care system have been disappearing, only to be found later working as sex slaves in brothels or private homes. And incredibly, the Irish government has not even been keeping statistics on the number of cases.



The revelations, based on leaked U.S. diplomatic cables, were made public in early June by the [Irish Independent](#). The explosive documents from the American embassy in Dublin were handed to the newspaper by the whistle-blowing organization WikiLeaks.

According to the cables, U.S. diplomats compiling a yearly report on human trafficking in the country learned of the problem from officials with Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE). The study containing the explosive information was sent to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington.

In addition to assessing the nation's efforts to fight human trafficking, the documents contain the startling admissions from the Irish government that shocked observers around the world. A 2009 cable detailing a briefing by the HSE, for example, tells the story of two minors who went missing from the foster-care system. They were located by Irish police in 2008 working in the sex industry.

Another cable discusses foreign-born children working as slaves in brothels, restaurants, and households. The kids, being found in towns and cities across the nation, had all disappeared from foster care. Chinese children in Ireland were believed to be at particularly high risk of being exploited, according to HSE officials.

Separate cables based on Irish intelligence reports detailed the human-trafficking operations of two [Chinese Communist Party-linked Triad gangs](#) operating in Ireland. The documents revealed "strong Chinese involvement in the trafficking of children, some of whom end up working as sex slaves in brothels," reported the *Independent* in [another article](#) last week.

In February of 2009, the *Irish Times* reported that almost 500 children who arrived in Ireland without parents over a nine-year period had gone missing from the foster care system. At least some of those likely ended up in forced prostitution, according to experts [cited](#) in the article.

Of course, reports of widespread sex slavery in Ireland are nothing new. In 2006, a documentary [shed light](#) on the brutal enslavement of Eastern European women and girls in a shadowy sex trafficking underworld operating all across the nation.

The recently leaked cables, however, claimed the nation had made "significant strides" in fighting human trafficking over the last few years. As evidence, it pointed to the prosecution of five individuals. But since there are no statistics on the number of children disappearing from foster care and forced into sex slavery, it was unclear whether the problem was in fact being dealt with seriously.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 15, 2011

Ireland, of course, is not alone. The latest revelations about the nation's problems could easily have come from any number of other countries. Close by, a recent headline in the U.K. *Guardian* read: "[Hundreds of trafficked children are disappearing from the care system.](#)" A 2008 piece in the same paper entitled "[Lost 400 children may have been trafficked into sex or drugs trade](#)" also dealt with kids disappearing from government care.

Indeed, major problems with government foster-care systems and sexual abuse seem to be something of an international tragedy. In Sweden, for example, a 2009 government report showed that half of all children growing up in the state foster care over 70 years were sexually abused while in the system. A 1970s [scandal](#) involving a brothel using children from the foster-care system also ensnared some of the nation's top political leaders.

Even more recently, the former police chief for one of Sweden's largest cities was taken down for running a sex-slavery operation and raping children. And French "Culture Minister" Frederic Mitterrand admitted in a 2005 autobiography that he traveled to Southeast Asia to purchase sex from young boys. [Examples](#) from Europe are virtually endless.

But in America, problems with the foster-care system and sex abuse are widespread, too. Many thousands of children have [gone missing](#) from government custody across the nation. And while statistics are spotty, available information offers serious cause for concern.

Florida's Department of Children and Families is said to be one of the worst, [officially](#) acknowledging that hundreds of foster children are currently missing, though down from the over 1,000 of recent years. And in 2009, an official with the agency [pleaded guilty](#) to using children under government care in the production of child pornography.

Other states face similar situations. The child welfare agency serving just Los Angeles County admitted a decade ago that 740 foster children were missing. And that figure was well below the national average, according to an agency spokesman. Today, almost 1,000 children in the LA county's system alone are [admittedly](#) missing.

Experts say many of the missing foster-care children end up in the sex trade. Former State Senator [Nancy Schaeffer](#), former FBI Special Agent in Charge [Ted Gunderson](#), and [other officials](#) have even [alleged](#) that some of those children are actually abused by high-ranking individuals in government, pedophile rings, and [satanic cults](#).

While a lot of explosive information has been learned in recent years from documents released by WikiLeaks, most of it dealt with diplomatic negotiations and related matters. But it's not the first time secret cables released by the organization have shed light on outrageous sex crimes involving children and governments.

Cables leaked late last year, for instance, [showed that American taxpayers were footing the bill for Afghan police recruits' sexual escapades with underage boys](#). The corrupt U.S.-backed Karzai regime tried to quash the story. And it almost succeeded, despite the fact that the U.S.-government contractor involved in the scandal had a history of child sex-slavery problems. But WikiLeaks blew it wide open.

The cables relating to Ireland's missing foster-care kids ending up in the sex trade have not yet been publicly released. And the nature and full scope of the problem remains unclear. But analysts hope that more information will become available as public pressure to tackle the outrages mounts.



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