



Comisión **Unidos Vs. Trata**

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

A Pathway to Freedom: Rescue and Refuge for Sex Trafficking Victims

One-hundredth and fourteenth Congress

Testimony of Karla Jacinto

Survivor of Human Trafficking and Advocate for Commission United Vs Human Trafficking (Comisión Unidos vs Trata, A.C.)

Mexico

This testimony is being delivered in English by Rita Hernandez

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for taking the time from your important schedules to listen to my story. My name is Karla, and today I have a voice, but for more than 4 years of my life, from the age of 12, as a little girl whose mother had thrown her out on the streets, open to anyone wanting to take advantage of my vulnerabilities, I fell prey to a professional pimp, who after three months of wooing me and treating me as a princess, propped me up on a corner and forced me to work the streets for his own gain. For years and years I was coerced, intimidated, threatened, beaten, robbed of my children, and emotionally and sexually violated time and time again. During those years I was forced to serve every type of fetish imaginable to more than 40,000 clients. Of those, many were foreigners visiting my city looking to have sexual interactions with minors like me.

Please try to put yourself in my shoes: broken, abandoned, violated, hurt, denigrated, and enslaved at a time when I should have been playing with dolls and



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looking forward to a fun day at school. Today I am thankful to be able to stand before you a reintegrated woman. At the age of 16, a man that became a regular client, was able to see beyond the short-term pleasure, into the eyes of a broken girl. He helped me escape, and I entered the *Fundación Camino a Casa* shelter, there I received the help, care, time, attention and love that I needed to put the broken pieces of my soul back together. I am 22, and for the last 5 years, my life has been dedicated to raising my voice to anyone willing to hear that we exist, that there are thousands of little girls and boys in my country being used for the pleasure of those who only live for their own desires, economic gain and exertion of power. It is up to us, both governments and non government organizations to work together to prevent this crime, punish those who commit them, to look and rescue for those who are already caught in the web, and to provide the care necessary for their healing and reintegration to a healthy society. Not one person can do it by himself or herself. We are all responsible, we are all affected, and we can all do something. Today, your people have chosen you to have a position of influence that can truly make a difference, and I hope that my story will help you make some choices that will put a stop to this horrible crime. Thank you.