



Bongas, Indramayu District, West Java, September 2022

Two pieces of law in Indonesia 'criminalise' human trafficking and pimping. Especially among underage women, there is a broad international consensus that victims of prostitution (prostitutes) are victims of human trafficking.

According to the UN definition (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/faqs.html>), human trafficking consists of the following: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring a person either under threat, use of force or other form of coercion, kidnapping, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation.

According to the latest UN figures (https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tip/2021/GLOTIP_2020_15jan_web.pdf), half of the victims of human trafficking in poor countries are children under the age of 18.

Also according to this report, the countries of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, detect very few cases of human trafficking compared to other parts of the world (Global report on trafficking in person 2020, p.152).

Our readers who follow us and read our articles and blogs know that the Indramayu district has been the cradle of prostitution on the island of Java and in Indonesia in general for more than 1500 years. We invite our readers to visit www.talithakoumi.org to find the articles in question.

Finally, given the unparalleled magnitude of the problem of human trafficking in general, and more specifically the trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the question arises: How is it that Indonesia not be put in the hot seat for its inaction in this area?

This country and other international organizations cannot plead ignorance. The following article, an interview with the chief of police of Bongas, is the 3rd and the penultimate of a series of interviews carried out during Talitha Koumi's last trip to Indonesia.

As with the other speakers, we had to pay 500,000 rupees to Chief Maryudi so that he would agree to receive us. So here is the transcript.

My name is Daniel Jean, I am a Canadian photojournalist reporting to better understand the issue of trafficking and sexual exploitation of underage girls in the Indramayu district.



I appreciate you finding time in your busy schedule to answer my questions.

You can, of course, end this interview whenever you wish or refuse to answer certain questions, but you must understand that your refusal, for a journalist, will raise questions about the reasons surrounding your refusal to answer.

Q1. How long have you been a police officer? *30 years.*

Q2. And head of this police station? *3 months.*

Q3. Why did you choose this career? *I wanted to have a job, a career that allowed me to devote my time and energy to serving society.*

Q4. How many children do you have ? Are you married ? *I have a wife and 3 children, they are respectively 29 years old (boy), 28 years old (boy) and 9 years old (girl).*

Q5. With regard to my subject, do you believe that there is a major problem of trafficking in minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the Bongas region? *Since I have been in office, I have not been informed of any case of trafficking in minors. However, currently, my staff is in close contact with the communities in order to be informed if there are cases.*

In the past, people in the region were more inclined to denounce this kind of situation, but not anymore.

Q6. Do you know the cause of this change in attitude? *The parents know that if the police know that they have sent their daughter into a prostitution ring, they will have to deal with the law. So they don't talk about it openly anymore.*

Q7. How do you, as a police officer, get information about relatives committing this crime? *We ask people in authority (teachers, village chief, etc.) to keep us informed of any situation involving the trafficking of minors, even if the information is fragmentary.*

Q8. Do you consider prostitutes as workers or victims of abuse? *(Sigh of the chief, in addition to the incessant click-click of his pen since the beginning of the interview) In my opinion, there are women who are victims of prostitution because it is against their will and there are others who choose to become prostitutes.*

Q9. If the choice is motivated by economic difficulties, is it still a choice? *I cannot answer this question, it is very personal and I have never asked families about it.*

Q10. In Canada, the fight against human trafficking consists of penalizing clients, pimps and traffickers. What about in your jurisdiction? Only the the pimp will be penalized, not the prostitute and the client.

Q11. How many pimps have you arrested since last year? We haven't arrested any of them because that's the job of the central city police. It is not our responsibility here at Indramayu to make pimp arrests.

Q12. Yet section 506 of your law stipulates that it is a crime to be a pimp. How can it not be your responsibility to stop them? It is indeed our responsibility to arrest pimps and we then refer them to the city center but since I have been in office (3 months), we have not arrested a single one.

Q13. It is a proven fact that Indramayu is a major supplier of prostitutes here in Indonesia and elsewhere in Asia. In addition, one only has to walk around the region to see that small brothels abound there. How do you explain then that you did not make any arrests? (Policeman clears throat) I haven't found any brothels in the Bongas district but we will do some research to locate them. If we find any brothels, we'll report it to the downtown police.

Q14. Do these downtown police officers respond quickly to this kind of report? The response time is very fast, we follow up on WhatsApp.

Q15. You haven't arrested any pimps. What about the traffickers, as far as the last year is concerned? None.

Q16. In your opinion, is it okay for a woman to prostitute herself? Of course not ! This is why we do prevention with children at school through targeted programs. We invite girls not to have free sex because it can lead to prostitution because then these same young girls will not receive a marriage proposal and deception can lead them to prostitution.



Q17. Since you see prostitutes as victims of abuse, do you and your colleagues believe it would be a good idea to criminalize clients? Yes. Moreover, the law provides that customers can be arrested if they use the services of a young underage woman.



I would like this section of the law to be amended to also apply to victims over the age of 18.

Q18. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle in the fight against the trafficking of minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation? At this time I don't have an answer but as soon as possible we will be polling the community for answers and we intend to tackle this issue with a lot of energy.

Q19. I did not see any policewoman in the police station. Why ? The policewomen are located in the city center, they do office work.

Q20. Considering that it is mainly men who are the abusers, do you think it would be a good idea to have policewomen to establish contact with the victims of prostitution? I think that would be a good thing, but there are very few policewomen.

Q21. When you go to schools, do you promote police careers to students? Yes, and we also ask school principals to send us the very good academic records of female students so that we can approach them directly when there are job openings.

Q22. Do you often receive calls for help from prostitutes in this police station? Not for 3 months, no.

Next article: M. Dalam, MP for the Indramayu district