



## The Dark World of the Arab Child Slave Trade

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In a story last week in the British newspaper [The Sun](#), a private investigator stated that Madeleine McCann, the subject of probably the world's most famous unsolved kidnapping case, is in the United States. The British girl was three years old when she went missing five years ago from a seaside resort in Portugal, where her parents were vacationing. The Portuguese police, in what has been termed a "bungled investigation," at first accused the parents of the abduction but later cleared them. Portuguese security officials halted their investigation to find the missing child in 2008 after stating she had probably been "stolen to order."

Since her disappearance, numerous alleged sightings have been made of the little girl across Europe, Africa, in North America and in Australia. The investigator making the latest claim concerning McCann's whereabouts is an amateur sleuth originally from Angola. He told [The Sun](#) that a Portuguese pedophile ring, also responsible for other child abductions, took the McCann girl and has handed his findings over to authorities. The claim that a pedophile ring is responsible for McCann's disappearance has been made before, especially concerning one in Belgium. And while Madeleine McCann girl may have very well been snatched by such evil hands, it is surprising that an equally depraved institution — one of gigantic size — has never even been considered by investigators or the media as McCann's possible kidnapper: namely, the Arab child slave trade.

While tens of thousands of adults are also victims of Arab slavers, many people only first took notice of the Arab slave trade in children when reports of [enslaved child camel jockeys](#) emerged from Persian Gulf countries. A 2004 HBO documentary on the subject was especially responsible for making Americans aware of this modern-day barbarism. These boys, who were sold by poor parents hoping their offspring would some day experience a better life, were primarily from South Asia. But instead of a life of dignity and meaningful work, they wound up in the Middle East where they were made to race camels for their Arab masters. Beaten and often sexually abused, they were all kept undernourished, so that the camels would have less weight to carry.

"As many as 6,000 child camel jockeys...languished in hidden slavery on *ozbah* farms, where their masters beat them and starved them to keep their weight down," wrote E. Benjamin Skinner in his book, *A Crime So Monstrous*.

When investigating in the 1990s the enslavement of hundreds of thousands of black Africans in Mauritania by Arab-Berber masters, African-American author Samuel Cotton was stunned to discover that African children were still being kidnapped by Arabs traveling with camels carrying big baskets. The child, usually playing alone, would suddenly be snatched from its play and placed in one such basket, after which its new owners hurried away. The children, he was told, are sometimes found later "hundreds of miles away as slaves."

Also during his investigation, which was summarized in his highly informative book *Silent Terror: A Journey Into Contemporary African Slavery*, Cotton was told there was "still a huge trafficking in slaves going on between Mauritania and the United Arab Emirates."

Black African children are also not always stolen so surreptitiously. Until recently in the southern Sudan, the old-fashioned slave raid witnessed villages being burned down, the men killed and the women and children captured. This was the Arab slavers' main harvesting tool of humans. Thousands of children were captured by this murderous method and forcibly taken as agricultural, domestic and sex slaves to Arab northern Sudan — where many still languish today. Darfur has also seen many children disappear from both refugee camps and towns subjected to central government attack. They are suspected victims of Arab slave hunters.

But it is not only non-Arab children who are Arab child slave trade victims. An Egyptian newspaper, referring to a 2008 UNICEF report, stated Egyptian children are being bought and sold for about \$3,000 for "domestic work and farming, among other things." This trade in children is so extensive in Egypt, organizations are "employing brokers, and even operating their own web sites.

"Many are also sent to the Gulf States, with orphanages being a major supplier," the story further reports.

Even from a country as far away as the [Philippines](#) children are trafficked to the Middle East. In 2008, for example, 34 minors between the ages of 14 and 16 were rescued at Manila airport by social workers as they were about to depart on fake passports for unnamed Middle Eastern countries. Again, war and poverty played a role in these young people's desperation. They were from refugees camps in the war-torn southern island of Mindanao where an insurgency is raging between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

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While most civilized people nowadays recoil in horror from the idea of slavery, especially when it involves children, many fundamentalist Middle Eastern Muslims do not. In fact, they view the psychological death and destruction of innocent lives as their legal right. Under sharia law, which rules the Sudan and the Gulf States, Muslims are legally allowed to own slaves. Bernard Lewis, the eminent scholar of Islam, writes "...the institution of slavery is not only recognized but is elaborately regulated by Sharia law." Another reason for this inhuman sense of entitlement is the prophet Muhammad was also a slave owner, setting the example for the fundamentalists.

Besides a codified religious supremacy, there is also the element of racial superiority behind the hideous practice of Arab slavery, especially when it concerns black Africans. Arab racism is at the roots of Islamic slavery that has seen 14 million black Africans enslaved and sold around the Islamic world from the seventh to the twentieth century.

Unfortunately for its victims, the abolition of Arab slavery will be difficult to even initiate — especially when the international community remains deafeningly silent about it. The case of Dr. Abu Zayd, a Cairo University professor and Islamic theologian, amply illustrates the problem. When Zayd contended that ["keeping slave girls and taxing non-Muslims"](#) was contrary to Islam, an Egyptian sharia court forcibly divorced him from his wife and declared him an apostate. He later had to flee to Europe to escape Islamic extremists who wanted to kill him because of his apostate status.

Slavery was only abolished in Saudi Arabia and other states of the Arabian Peninsula in the early 1960s, so one cannot expect an institution that has existed for centuries to be away any time soon. For example, the widow of the emir of Abu Dhabi and her four daughters were caught living in Brussels in 2008 with 20 slaves who they were mistreating. And Dubai is the center for the region's sex industry that Skinner calls "a place of slavery for women." Promised jobs, thousands of women full of hope arrive there from Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia annually only to have their passports taken away immediately upon arrival and to be forced into prostitution.

One Gulf State Arab woman, a former candidate for Kuwait's parliament, does not even hide the fact there should be [sex slaves for Arab men](#) and claims sheikhs and muftis she spoke with in Mecca sanctioned this. As a result, Salwa al-Mutairi wants non-Muslim women captured in war made available to Muslim men, so that the men can be "protected from adultery." She affirmed: "For example, in the Chechnya war, surely there are female Russian captives. So go and buy those and sell them here in Kuwait...I don't see any problem in this."

Al-Mutairi's despicable utterances came only a week after [a Muslim preacher announced](#) that, since Islam allows Muslims to buy and sell conquered infidel women, "When I want a sex-slave, I go to the market and pick whichever female I desire and buy her."

It is not the purpose or intent of this article to engage in sensationalist or unfounded finger-pointing. But what a crime it would be to neglect finding and freeing a child slave because the hunt for his or her captors would be deemed politically incorrect. Indeed, in light of the widespread phenomenon discussed above, why is the possibility of Madeleine McCann being a child slave somewhere in the Middle East not even *remotely considered* in the investigation of her disappearance? Yes, it is only conjecture, but so is looking into all the other possibilities. Why, for instance, is publicly hypothesizing that she is probably somewhere in the U.S. considered legitimate, but *even breathing a word* about the possibility of her being somewhere in the Middle East considered illegitimate — when it is a fact that an international Arab human-slave trafficking business is in full effect?

The fact that the McCanns were at a Portuguese seaside resort when Madeleine was taken made the kidnappers' task easier. Since the child-snatchers may have very well made their escape by sea, there would be no borders to cross until they reached their destination — potentially a Middle Eastern one. The Islamic world, after all, is very close to Portugal.

The British government has recently assigned [30 detectives](#) in a major effort to locate the missing girl. Of course, myriad evils could be behind this tragic crime. And they must all be looked into. But in light of what is known about the Arab child slave trade, will investigators spend even at least a modicum of time considering the distinct possibility of Middle Eastern sex-slave traffickers' involvement? The empirical reality would justify it — as it would justify the international community starting to be even slightly interested in, and outraged about, this dark and evil phenomenon in general.

By Stephen Brown  
[Frontpage Magazine](#)

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