



ACT!

AGAINST
VIOLENCE
AND SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION

WEBSITE



Profile of the victims: SOFIA

Sofia (*not real name*), age 22, who live in Venezuela in poverty for most of her life, **felt she found the right escape when she was contacted by a school friend on facebook, who now live in Guyana about a job offer for a sales girl in Guyana.** She was happy to share the news with those at home.

Sofia did not hesitate to respond to the message, she didn't even think twice before saying yes to the job offer to work in a retail store in a country that is becoming popular owing to its mining activity and its massive oil discoveries.

But this job turns out to be total opposite of what was promised. She was duped into coming to Guyana.

She journeys to the only English-speaking country in South America, ended with her being locked up in a hotel room five days, before she was finally taken into the interior to work in the mines as a sex worker. Sofia was given US\$500 for her journey to Guyana. This fuel enthusiastic on coming and getting this job because of her parent's unemployment and a 12-year-old brother at home. She told her family that she was going to work for a few months and that she would send some money back home, Sofia felt she needed to help and what a better way to do so than through a well-paid job in Guyana.

Both her mother and father along with her boyfriend were not comfortable with her coming to Guyana, but Sofia was hell bent on making the journey to Guyana and getting the job.

She reassured them that her school friend could be trusted and that she would be okay and would contact them very often. She journeyed and arrived at the border between Guyana and Venezuela in region one and was cleared by an immigration officer, where she was picked up by a taxi driver and not her friend, and taken to a hotel in region one. There she was joined by more girls and spent approximately seven days in the community before she was transported to a mining area.

When she reaches the mining area, there she met her school friend for the first time since arriving in Guyana.

Her friend, who was working with a man that operated a small mine.

It was there Sofia was told that there were no sales girl jobs available for her at the store, but she would have to sell her body. Sofia was shocked and new that she had a debt of US\$500 that has to be repaid.

She fell trapped at that moment, she was angry, confused, disappointed and hopeless.

Sofia explained, at first “I cried so much, the hotel became my home and I was now a full-time sex worker, at the crack of dawn until night.

Sometimes going into the jungle, sleeping with random men, at least four to five times most days”.

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