

NZ Herald silent on facilitating child sex crimes

Tuesday, 22 May 2018, 2:49 pm

Press Release: [Stop Demand](#)

New Zealand's largest circulating newspaper, The New Zealand Herald, has come under fire for its role in facilitating child sex crimes against an Auckland girl, and its refusal to discuss its sex trade advertisements with an advocacy group working to combat child sexual exploitation.

At today's sentencing of Avneesh Sehgal, to four years and eight months prison for his role in some 1000 sex crimes against his partner's daughter, it was reported that Sehgal and the victim's mother advertised the girl in the New Zealand Herald as one of two "HOT SEXY busty Indian girls", claiming she was 18-years-old when she was in fact only aged 15.

Stop Demand, which has long-worked on combatting child sexual exploitation including underage prostitution, says it has been "fobbed off" by the New Zealand Herald's editor Shayne Currie despite four emailed requests over the past month, three from the organisation and one made via a New Zealand Herald senior reporter to both Currie and his Deputy Editor.

Stop Demand's founder, Denise Ritchie, says "Our questions have been fair and reasonable, in the circumstances. We suspect that the Herald is

‘fobbing us off’ in the hope we will ‘go away’. Currie’s refusal to engage, or have someone else engage, with us is disappointing.”

In particular, Stop Demand is asking: (1) What, if any, steps does NZ Herald take to ensure that the sexual services being advertised through its paper are not from the under aged or from victims of coercion or trafficking? (2) What steps does NZ Herald take to ensure that the ads offering up the services of “new” Asian girls and women are not breaching the Immigration Act and s19 of the Prostitution Reform Act?

Ritchie says the second question was asked, given the proliferation of Herald sex ads that offer the services of “new Asian girls”, with some referencing 18-year-olds in not dissimilar wording to that advertising the 15-year-old victim in the Lata case.

Denise Ritchie, a barrister, says that section 19 of the PRA prohibits temporary visa-holders to New Zealand providing sexual services and prohibits businesses facilitating such services.

Stop Demand believes that the 1000 child sex crimes in this case were also facilitated by New Zealand’s liberal laws on prostitution. Advertisements like those in the New Zealand Herald would not be permitted in countries where the purchase of sexual services is prohibited – namely, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Canada, France, Canada and Ireland – as these countries aim for a more gendered-respectful society.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1805/S00504/nz-herald-silent-on-facilitating-child-sex-crimes.htm>

