

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1196
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Somalia
Udgivet:	29. september 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	8. oktober 2025

2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Somalia

SOMALIA (Special Case)

Somalia remains a Special Case country. The country faced protracted conflict, insecurity, and ongoing humanitarian crises, which impeded government, international community, and NGO operations and anti-trafficking efforts. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) controlled its capital city, Mogadishu, and Federal Member State (FMS) governments retained control over their respective capitals. Insecurity limited FGS influence outside Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab, an al-Qa'ida-affiliated terrorist organization based in Somalia, continued to occupy and control many rural areas and maintained freedom of movement in other areas. Al-Shabaab exploited the local population by collecting illegal "taxes" from businesses, conducted indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure across the country, and perpetrated human trafficking. The sustained insurgency by al-Shabaab continued to be a significant obstacle to the government's ability to combat human trafficking.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

FGS and FMS authorities sustained minimal law enforcement efforts to combat trafficking. The FGS continued to lack a comprehensive legal framework to address human trafficking. The pre-1991 penal code, applicable at the federal and regional levels, criminalized labor trafficking and some forms of sex trafficking. Article 455 criminalized slavery, prescribing penalties of five to 20 years' imprisonment. Article 464 criminalized forced labor, prescribing penalties of six months to five years' imprisonment. Article 457 criminalized the transferring, disposing, taking possession, or holding of a person and prescribed penalties of three to 12 years' imprisonment. All these penalties were sufficiently stringent. Article 408(1) criminalized "compelled prostitution" of a person through violence or threats, prescribing penalties of two to six years' imprisonment, which were sufficiently stringent but not commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes, such as rape. The provisional constitution prohibited slavery, servitude, trafficking, and forced labor under Article 14. Article 29(6) under the provisional constitution prohibited the use of children in armed conflict. The Puntland FMS 2017 human trafficking legal framework prohibited trafficking in persons; however, international organizations previously reported authorities did not implement the law.

Similar to previous years, neither the FGS nor the FMS collected comprehensive statistics on law enforcement efforts related to trafficking, hindering its ability to collect and disaggregate national human trafficking statistics. In 2024, the FGS Office of the Attorney General (OAG) reported 31 trafficking investigations, compared with 57 trafficking investigations in 2023. All 31 investigations involved unspecified forms of exploitation. The OAG reported prosecuting 31 alleged traffickers under trafficking-related laws of the penal code (Articles 455-457), compared with 77 trafficking-related prosecutions in 2023. Courts convicted nine traffickers, compared with convicting 67 traffickers in 2023. The court did not provide sentencing data for convicted traffickers. Officials' propensity to conflate human trafficking and migrant smuggling and focus on transnational trafficking made it probable that some reported cases involved other crimes not involving exploitation through forced labor or sex trafficking. Prosecutors routinely charged traffickers under related statutes with lesser penalties. The government reported continuing informal cooperation with officials in Libya on migration issues, including potential trafficking crimes. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking crimes, including officials for the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers; however, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns, inhibiting law enforcement action.

Law enforcement, prosecutorial personnel, and courts remained understaffed and undertrained and lacked capacity to effectively enforce anti-trafficking laws. The Somali Police Force (SPF) Criminal Investigations Department maintained specialized anti-trafficking and migrant smuggling units in Mogadishu, Puntland, and South West State mandated to investigate potential cases of trafficking. The government maintained two SPF positions focused exclusively on trafficking cases, including a police investigator assigned to Adan Abdulle International Airport police station and another officer appointed to the Immigration Directorate to liaise with officers on trafficking in persons cases. The OAG also maintained a specialized anti-trafficking unit consisting of one senior prosecutor and two junior prosecutors. Observers noted the OAG primarily operated in urban areas like Mogadishu, leaving many rural and conflict-affected areas without adequate law enforcement or judicial oversight. The government did not report conducting training for police, prosecutors, judges, and immigration officials on anti-trafficking enforcement policies, and laws.

The government did not report identifying any trafficking victims, compared with identifying 142 victims in 2023. The government also did not report whether any victims were referred to services for the second consecutive year. The government did not have standard operating procedures to identify or refer trafficking victims to services, and all levels of government relied fully on international organizations and NGOs to provide victim services. The government, with some support from an international organization, repatriated 201 Somali citizens, including potential trafficking victims, from Madagascar and Libya. The FGS did not report providing any funding for victim services or auxiliary support to organizations assisting victims and vulnerable populations. The law allowed victims to obtain restitution or file civil suits for compensation, but the government did not report any did so.

An international organization continued to operate a migration response center (MRC) in Bosasso and provided services for transiting migrants, including potential trafficking victims. The MRC offered services such as medical care, psycho-social support, and shelter, and operated a hotline. In 2024, an international organization registered 1,968 vulnerable migrants in Bosasso; the organization screened all registered migrants for trafficking indicators and reported identifying many individuals as potential trafficking victims. Another international organization operated temporary shelters for vulnerable children, including trafficking victims; services included psychosocial support, education, and medical care. Victim support varied significantly across the country, and specialized care was sporadic because of limited availability of services. Due to a lack of formal identification procedures, authorities did not take effective measures to prevent the inappropriate penalization of potential victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, including among migrants or individuals in commercial sex. Unlike in previous years, the government did not report screening detained individuals for trafficking indicators at ports of entry, particularly in Mogadishu. The government did not have a legal alternative to the removal of foreign trafficking victims from Somalia to countries where they may face hardship or retribution, nor did it provide government benefits or services to foreign victims.

The government made efforts to prevent trafficking. A lack of technical expertise and limited capacity continued to hinder the government's overall efforts to develop and coordinate an effective anti-trafficking policy. The government did not have a designated lead anti-trafficking official, agency, or national coordinating body and remained without a NAP to combat human trafficking. Although awareness-raising activities remained limited, officials from the Ministry of Women and Development Affairs collaborated with an international organization and local NGOs to conduct anti-trafficking awareness activities in Puntland for the first time in five years, including training sessions for front-line officials, community outreach events, and distribution of informational materials. The OAG had a general hotline to report all crimes, including human trafficking that was not fully operational due to resource constraints. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs employed 35 labor inspectors to enforce labor laws; however, they remained without operational resources and did not receive training on relevant trafficking laws to identify potential trafficking crimes. The Ministry of Labor had a directive banning local employment agencies from recruiting and placing domestic migrant workers abroad. Observers reported the ban on migration increased the likelihood of unauthorized migration and heightened vulnerabilities to trafficking. The government enacted a new labor code that provided guidelines for the licensing, registration, and monitoring of recruitment agencies and labor brokers. The government also adopted national

strategies to increase protections for migrant workers and align labor protections with international standards. The government established a bilateral labor agreement with Saudi Arabia to enhance protections for migrant workers. The government did not provide anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. In March 2025, Somalia acceded to the UN TIP Protocol.

The dire security situation and restrictions on movement of humanitarian and human rights actors continued to hamper comprehensive efforts to address the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers. Al-Shabaab continued to commit the vast majority of unlawful child soldier recruitment or use actions, although Galmudug police, Puntland police, Puntland forces, and Puntland Commando Forces continued to unlawfully recruit and use child soldiers, at times through the use of force. State and non-state actors unlawfully recruited or used children in various roles, including as combatants, security escorts, checkpoint guards, and messengers; however, perpetrators used the majority of children for unknown purposes.

Unlike in prior years, the government did not report whether it continued to implement the 2012 action plan to end the unlawful recruitment or use of children by the SNA. The Interministerial Committee on Children and Armed Conflict (ICCAC), co-chaired by the Ministry of Defense's Child Protection Unit (CPU) and an international organization, coordinated government efforts to address child protection. The Ministry of Defense continued to oversee a national children and armed conflict working group composed of representatives from the FGS, FMS, and international organizations. The government had age verification guidelines, including a standardized checklist and formal procedure, to prevent the recruitment of children into armed forces. However, most Somalis lacked birth certificates, and, in the absence of established birth registration systems, verifying claims of unlawful recruitment or use of children was difficult. The CPU, in partnership with international organizations and foreign donors, previously screened SNA personnel at five military bases, but did not report on those activities this year. The government did not report identifying any child soldiers, or conducting training or awareness campaigns targeted toward military and community leaders to prevent the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers. International organizations and NGOs continued to report some government forces arrested and detained children for their actual or alleged association with al-Shabaab or other armed groups and did not apply juvenile justice standards or adhere to international obligations, undermining government commitments and efforts to treat child soldiers as victims.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE:

Trafficking affects all communities. This section summarizes government and civil society reporting on the nature and scope of trafficking over the past five years. Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Somalia, and traffickers exploit victims from Somalia abroad. Information regarding trafficking trends in Somalia remains challenging to obtain or authenticate. Reports indicate al-Shabaab continues to facilitate human trafficking crimes through deception, infiltration of *madrassas* and mosques, coercion or harassment of clan elders or family members, school raids, and abductions to recruit and use victims – including children – in direct hostilities and military support roles. Al-Shabaab exploits women and girls in sexual slavery and forced marriage to al-Shabaab militants. Criminals involved in terrorist networks may lure and recruit Kenyan and Ugandan adults and children to Somalia to join non-state armed groups, primarily al-Shabaab, sometimes with fraudulent promises of lucrative employment.

IDPs, minority populations, people residing in al-Shabaab territory, and Somali children working in informal sectors remain the most vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor. Some Somalis willingly surrender custody of their children to people with whom they share familial ties or clan linkages who may subsequently exploit some of these children in forced labor or sex trafficking; some families reportedly push children to join armed groups after experiencing severe financial hardship or attacks on their communities by opposing armed groups. Traffickers may exploit children in forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, herding, selling or portering *khat*, crushing stones, fishing, forced begging, or construction. Most trafficking networks continue to be organized

by a combination of Somali, Djiboutian, Eritrean, and North African traffickers. Somali economic migrants sometimes incur debts under the “go now, pay later” trafficking scheme or through economic exploitation. Traffickers also target and recruit children using false promises that no payment will be demanded until they reach their targeted destinations. According to an international organization, traffickers extort payments from families left behind or exert threats if they refuse or are unable to pay. Traffickers increasingly recruit individuals through social media platforms and travel agencies, which at times may facilitate trafficking crimes. Traffickers and dubious employment agencies reportedly take advantage of the vulnerability of internally displaced women and children, mostly from southern and central Somalia, at times using false promises of lucrative jobs in Europe and North America. Traffickers transport Somali women, sometimes via Djibouti, to the Middle East, where they are exploited in forced labor, particularly in domestic service, or sex trafficking. Traffickers exploit Somali men in farming and construction in the Gulf states. Traffickers transport Somali children to Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates and force them to beg on the streets.

Traffickers exploit victims from Somalia and neighboring countries along cross-border routes, mirroring migration flows: a northern route through Sudan towards Saudi Arabia or Yemen; an eastern route through Djibouti towards Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates; a southern route through Kenya and Tanzania towards South Africa; and a western route through Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya towards Europe. Economic migrants from Ethiopia illegally transiting through Somalia to Yemen are highly vulnerable to trafficking.

THE SOMALILAND REGION

The northwestern region of Somalia is administered as a self-declared but unrecognized independent region. In 1991, members of the Somali National Movement proclaimed the area an independent republic. The United States does not recognize Somaliland as an independent nation, nor does any other country.

Somaliland “criminalized” sex trafficking and labor trafficking in June 2022. The “law” prescribed penalties of five to 20 years’ imprisonment for trafficking offenses involving adult male victims, which were increased by up to one third for offenses involving adult women and child victims. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regards to sex trafficking, commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other grave crimes. For the fifth consecutive year, Somaliland did not report any anti-trafficking law enforcement actions. Somaliland did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of Somaliland representatives complicit in human trafficking crimes; however, corruption and complicity among Somaliland representatives in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns, inhibiting action. Somaliland did not report identifying any trafficking victims or efforts to provide protection services to victims. Observers reported that Somaliland had a nascent referral mechanism to refer trafficking victims to protective services, but officials at all levels relied fully on international organizations and NGOs to provide victim services. Potential trafficking victims in Somaliland received assistance at an international organization-run MRC in Hargeisa until the MRC could reunite them with their families; the international organization registered 1,729 vulnerable migrants, which included potential trafficking victims, compared with 2,242 vulnerable migrants in the previous reporting period. The anti-trafficking “law” permitted foreign trafficking victims to remain in Somaliland under temporary residence status during the investigation and court proceedings of their cases. The anti-trafficking “law” allowed victims to seek compensation from convicted traffickers. Somaliland representatives, in partnership with international organizations, reportedly maintained a migration task force that could deal with trafficking-related issues; however, representatives did not report the task force undertaking anti-trafficking efforts. Somaliland representatives did not report conducting anti-trafficking awareness activities, operating a hotline for trafficking victims, or making efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. Observers reported that an international organization provided training to front-line officials on the 2022 anti-trafficking law.

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Somaliland and traffickers exploit victims from Somaliland abroad. Information regarding trafficking trends and victims in Somaliland remains challenging to obtain or authenticate. Traffickers exploit women and children in domestic servitude and sex trafficking in Somaliland. International organizations report some women in Somaliland may act as recruiters and intermediaries to transport victims to Djibouti and Ethiopia for the purposes of forced labor in domestic work or sex trafficking. Somaliland continues to receive economic migrants and refugees from Ethiopia and Yemen, in addition to returnees primarily from Yemen and Saudi Arabia; these populations are vulnerable to human trafficking because of lack of documentation, job access, or education opportunities.