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discernable efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. The government provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

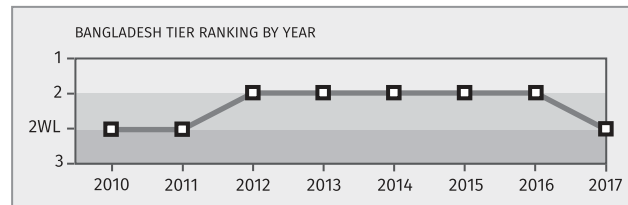
TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Bahrain is a destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Men and women, primarily from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Thailand, Syria, and Kenya, migrate voluntarily to Bahrain to work as domestic workers or as laborers in the construction and service industries. The greatest influx of workers during the current reporting year came from Bangladesh. A significant percentage of foreign workers borrowed money or sold property in their home countries to secure their jobs, increasing their vulnerability to debt bondage. Some foreign workers are subjected to forced labor in Bahrain; indicators of forced labor include passport retention, strict confinement, contract substitution, non-payment of wages, threats or intimidation, and physical or sexual abuse, which preclude employees from reporting instances of abuse and exploitation. Nationals of countries without diplomatic presence in Bahrain are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, as are domestic workers, who are only partially protected under Bahraini labor law and cultural norms and existing legal infrastructure avert private home inspection. Government and NGO officials report physical abuse and sexual assault of female domestic workers are significant problems in Bahrain. Bangladeshi unskilled workers are reportedly considered by employers to be exploitable as they typically refrain from contesting hazardous work environs or low pay. Some unscrupulous employers continue to lure migrant workers into the labor market under the “free visa” scheme—laborers who work for a non-sponsor employer after leaving the employment of the employer who sponsored their entry into the country—thereby rendering them vulnerable to exploitation. Some migrant workers do not possess their employment contracts and are generally unaware of the terms of employment. Women from Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern European countries are subjected to forced prostitution in Bahrain.

BANGLADESH: TIER 2 WATCH LIST

The Government of Bangladesh does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated significant efforts during the reporting period by finalizing and adopting the implementing rules for the 2012 Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (PSHTA) in January 2017 and drafting an implementation roadmap for the 2015-2017 national action plan. However, the government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. The government’s investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes decreased. Official complicity in trafficking crimes remained a serious problem, yet the government did not make efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict allegedly complicit law enforcement, border, and manpower officials. The number of victims identified by the government decreased. The government remained without a formal mechanism to refer trafficking victims to protective services and, protection services, when acquired, did not provide rehabilitation services designed for trafficking victims’ specific needs nor were they provided for adult male victims. NGOs reported victims were frequently

re-trafficked due to insufficient care. While the government maintained labor export agreements with several countries that aim to tackle recruitment fees, the government’s continued allowance of high recruitment fees combined with insufficient efforts to address illegally operating recruitment sub-agents left workers vulnerable to trafficking. Therefore, Bangladesh was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BANGLADESH

Take steps to eliminate all recruitment fees charged to workers by licensed labor recruiters and instead ensure they are paid by employers; increase prosecutions and convictions, particularly of labor traffickers and fraudulent labor recruiters, while strictly respecting due process; establish guidelines for provision of adequate victim care and standard operating procedures for the referral of victims to such services; thoroughly investigate credible allegations of government complicity in trafficking and prosecute officials who are suspected of being complicit; enhance the training provided to officials, including law enforcement, labor inspectors, and immigration officers, on methods to identify trafficking cases and refer victims to protection services; expand the support services available to victims, including adult male victims, within Bangladesh and at Bangladesh’s embassies abroad; expand the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment’s (MEWOE) mandate to include the regulation of sub-agents; improve quality of pre-departure trainings, including sessions on labor rights, labor laws, and methods to access justice and assistance in destination countries and Bangladesh; and accede to the 2000 UN TIP Protocol.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions but finalized implementing rules for its anti-trafficking law. The 2012 PSHTA generally prohibits and punishes all forms of human trafficking. Prescribed penalties for labor trafficking offenses are five to 12 years imprisonment and a fine of not less than 50,000 Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) (\$633); and prescribed penalties for sex trafficking offenses range from five years imprisonment to the death sentence. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The government finalized and in January 2017 officially released the implementing rules for the PSHTA; the government disseminated these rules but planned training sessions for relevant officials had not yet started.

The government investigated 122 sex and 168 labor trafficking cases in 2016 a decrease from 181 sex and 265 labor trafficking cases in 2015. Of the forced labor cases, 31 cases were specifically investigated for bonded labor. Authorities prosecuted 302 alleged traffickers in 2016, compared with 481 in 2015, under the PSHTA. The government convicted three traffickers in 2016, compared with four in 2015 and 15 in 2014. The courts sentenced the convicted traffickers to 14 years imprisonment and a fine of 25,000 BDT (\$316). Observers stated convictions

remained rare because the government had not dedicated adequate resources to pre-trial investigations and short timelines for the completion of cases led to inadequately prepared and subsequently unsuccessful prosecutions. The government's tribunal on human trafficking, proposed in the previous reporting period to specialize in trying trafficking cases, was not yet functional. An established tribunal, the Woman and Children Violence Protection Tribunal, heard trafficking cases in the interim; however observers commented the prosecutors were overburdened and lacked expertise in trafficking cases. In 2016, the government trained 29,889 police officers 186 training programs on anti-trafficking, funded through the government, NGOs, and international organizations. Some NGOs reported information about the PSHTA had not been circulated widely among district and local officials.

Complicity of officials in trafficking offenses remained a serious problem. Observers reported police took bribes and sexual favors to ignore potential trafficking crimes at brothels. Observers accused officials from district employment and manpower government offices of facilitating trafficking and border guards of ignoring potential trafficking crimes at maritime embarkation points. Observers stated some traffickers in rural areas were politically-connected and therefore operated with impunity. In September 2016, a federal court in New York entered a default judgment against a former Bangladeshi consular officer and his wife and ordered them to pay approximately \$920,000 to a Bangladeshi citizen in a suit in which the plaintiff alleged violations of the TVPA as well as federal and state labor laws. The consular officer appealed the case, judgment has not been paid and the consular official, who left the United States, remains in the Bangladeshi foreign service. During the reporting period, the government investigated, prosecuted, and convicted a Bangladeshi official on a peacekeeping mission of sexually exploiting a child; he was dismissed from service and sentenced to one year imprisonment. The government did not report any additional investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials allegedly complicit in human trafficking offenses in 2016.

PROTECTION

The government identified a decreased number of victims and its victim services were not comprehensive or specific to trafficking. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the government's lead agency for combating trafficking, had standard operating procedures for the proactive identification of trafficking victims; however, it is unclear how widely they were disseminated or used. The government reported the identification of 355 victims in 2016; of those identified, 212 were men, 138 women, and five children. This was a significant decrease from the 1,815 and 2,899 victims identified in 2015 and 2014, respectively; experts commented the decrease may be due in part to the application of a more accurate definition of trafficking. Police directly recovered from exploitation 204 of the 355 victims identified in 2016. The government did not provide services specifically designed for trafficking victims, but children and adult female victims could access support services for vulnerable people through nine multipurpose shelters, drop-in centers, and safe homes administered by the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW). The government placed an unknown number of female and child victims in these shelters in 2016; however, NGOs stated government services at these centers did not meet minimum standards of care and insufficient rehabilitation resources contributed to victims being re-trafficked. The government did not provide shelter or rehabilitation services to adult male victims; NGOs provided male victims with some services,

although shelter was not available. The government continued to lack a formal mechanism for authorities to refer victims to care. Police referred victims to NGO-provided shelter and services specifically for trafficking victims on an ad hoc basis.

The government continued to operate safe houses for female Bangladeshi workers fleeing abusive employers in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. The government maintained 29 labor offices in embassies and consulates overseas to provide welfare services to Bangladeshi migrant workers, including legal and interpretation services; however, observers reported one Bangladeshi labor attaché in the Middle East told migrant workers to return to work without addressing their complaints, suggesting that not all complaints were addressed. NGOs reported not all victims were aware of available opportunities for restitution. The arbitration process provided victims with restitution, but there was no parallel criminal process to address illegal activities, including alleged fraud by licensed recruitment agencies.

The Governments of Bangladesh and India reportedly continued to implement their 2015 MOU on human trafficking, which included coordination on the rescue and repatriation of Bangladeshi victims. The PSHTA provides for victim protection during judicial proceedings, including police security and the ability to testify via video, but it is unclear how frequently officials employed such protections. NGOs noted insufficient protection resulted in traffickers threatening victims not to pursue cases against them. NGOs reported some Bangladeshi trafficking victims being moved on land and sea routes, instead of being detected as victims, were instead detained and fined for failure to carry a passport. Unregistered Rohingya refugees, including potential trafficking victims, may have been at risk of indefinite detention because of their lack of documentation. The government did not provide legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims of trafficking to countries where they might face hardship or retribution.

PREVENTION

The government maintained some efforts to prevent trafficking, but did not adequately address the issue of high recruitment fees. The government continued to allow the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) to set recruitment fees sufficiently high to render many migrant workers indebted and vulnerable to trafficking. The 2013 Overseas Employment and Migrants Act prohibits fraudulent recruitment and unlawful recruitment fees, and outlines procedures through which Bangladeshi migrant workers, originally hired through the Bureau for Manpower, Education, and Training, could lodge complaints with MEWOE upon their return to Bangladesh and seek government arbitration for labor and recruitment violations, including allegations of forced labor. MEWOE reported 165 complaints were settled during 2016; it is unknown if any of these complaints involved forced labor. MEWOE suspended 13 recruitment agencies' licenses in 2016 for false advertising and charging fees above the legal maximum and referred three cases to the police for prosecution. The government initiated 229 cases against illegally operating *dalals*, unregulated sub-agents who operate in rural locations and connect prospective migrant workers to licensed employment agencies.

The government continued to use a number of bilateral labor agreements, in part intended to try to protect Bangladeshi workers abroad. For example, the government continued to use a bilateral labor agreement with Saudi Arabia for female migrant workers that mandated employers cover travel costs

and domestic workers be employed by a third party rather than the private households in which they work, but the agreement did not stipulate the maximum cost or eliminate the processing fee charged to the migrant by recruitment agencies. During the reporting period, Saudi Arabia lifted its seven-year ban on male Bangladeshi migrant workers and Bangladeshi females performing any job other than domestic work; MEWOE set the maximum recruitment cost for migrant workers to Saudi Arabia at 165,000 BDT (\$2,090), although media reported *dalals* charged intending migrant workers three to four times that amount. In February 2017, the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia began to implement an inter-governmental agreement signed in the previous reporting period to facilitate the migration of Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia. The agreement aimed to mitigate the impact of private recruitment agencies' high fees and sometimes unscrupulous practices for an initial 5,300 Bangladeshi workers by removing agents from the migration process. The government continued to require pre-departure training, including safe migration and anti-trafficking components, for some migrant workers, including a 30-day pre-departure training course for female domestic workers which focused on learning practical skills and included modules on trafficking awareness and self-protection.

In June 2016, the MHA, along with other agencies and NGOs, created an implementation roadmap for the 2015-2017 national action plan, launched in the previous reporting period. MHA published its annual report on human trafficking. Some district- and sub-district level counter-trafficking committees allocated funding for coordination and victim support while others were not functioning. The government continued to conduct awareness campaigns, at times in partnership with NGOs. In October 2016, the government passed the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, placing stricter control over the foreign funding of NGOs and enacting punitive provisions for those NGOs that make "derogatory" comments regarding the constitution of the country, its founding history, or constitutional bodies (i.e., government institutions and leaders). International NGOs that assist Rohingya refugees and work with organized labor reported difficulties in meeting stringent government administrative requirements in order to carry out programs protecting vulnerable populations from various forms of exploitation. In May 2016, the government initiated a census of undocumented Rohingya and stated its intent to distribute information cards to participants that would provide protection and improve access to basic services and work opportunities; at the end of the reporting period, the government had not yet released the results of the census and had since re-initiated the census to include the Rohingya who fled Burma towards the end of 2016. The government trained military personnel to recognize and prevent trafficking in persons prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions and provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or forced labor. Bangladesh is not a party to the 2000 UN TIP Protocol.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Bangladesh is primarily a source and, to a lesser extent, a transit and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Some Bangladeshi men and women who migrate willingly to work in the Middle East, Southern and East Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States face conditions indicative of forced labor. Before their departure, many migrant workers assume debt to pay high recruitment

fees, imposed legally by recruitment agencies belonging to BAIRA and illegally by unlicensed sub-agents; this places migrant workers at risk of debt bondage. Some recruitment agencies and agents also commit recruitment fraud, including contract switching, in which they promise one type of job and conditions but then change the job, employer, conditions, or salary after arrival. Bangladesh is host to an estimated 32,000 registered Rohingya refugees and up to 500,000 undocumented Rohingya, whose stateless status and inability to receive aid and work legally increases their vulnerability to human trafficking. Though numbers of such migrants were significantly fewer than in previous years, some Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants who travel by boat to Southeast Asian countries are subject to exploitation when they are unable to pay ransoms and are instead sold into forced labor. Women and girls who migrate for domestic work are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Some women who migrate through Bangladeshi recruitment agencies to Lebanon or Jordan for domestic work are subsequently sold and transported to Syria and subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Some women and children are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in India and Pakistan.

Within the country, children and adults are subjected to sex trafficking, domestic servitude, and forced and bonded labor, in which traffickers exploit an initial debt assumed by a worker as part of the employment terms. Street children are sometimes coerced into criminality or forced to beg; begging ringmasters sometimes maim children to increase their earnings. In some instances, children are sold into a form of bondage by their parents, while others are induced into labor through fraud and physical coercion, including in the domestic fish drying industry, or exploited in sex trafficking. Bangladeshi children are vulnerable to forced labor in tanneries. According to an international expert on debt bondage, Bangladeshi families and Indian migrant workers are subjected to bonded labor in some of Bangladesh's brick kilns; some kiln owners sell bonded females into prostitution purportedly to recoup the families' debts and some Bangladeshi families are subjected to debt bondage in shrimp farming. Some ethnic Indian families are forced to work in the tea industry in the northeastern part of the country. NGOs allege some officials allow human traffickers to operate at brothels, at India-Bangladesh border crossings, and at maritime embarkation points.

BARBADOS: TIER 2

The Government of Barbados does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore, Barbados remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by creating a new anti-trafficking law, which includes stringent penalties commensurate with other serious crimes and allows for victim restitution. The government also increased training for officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and employees in the hotel and tourism industries. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government did not initiate new prosecutions, had difficulty obtaining victim cooperation to prosecute traffickers, did not provide adequate resources to government agencies or relevant NGOs for training or furthering anti-trafficking efforts, and did not provide sufficient resources for victim care.