

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	585
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Hong Kong
Udgivet:	25. juni 2020
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. december 2020



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

20TH EDITION



JUNE 2020



authorities, psychologists, social workers, tourism professionals, students, and nongovernmental organization representatives throughout Honduras.

The Ministry of Labor (MOL) conducted 21,949 labor inspections but did not identify any forced labor cases in 2019. Experts noted the number of labor inspectors was not sufficient and inspectors did not have enough office facilities, training, and resources to carry out inspections and enforce the law effectively. Because labor inspectors continued to be concentrated in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, full labor inspections and follow-up visits to confirm compliance were far less frequent in other parts of the country. Officials also noted that problems in identification of forced labor victims were due to inadequate enforcement of existing regulations. In September 2019, the government signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States to improve the oversight of labor recruiters in the United States' H visa program. In 2017, the MOL issued new guidelines to enforce the 2015 decree requiring job placement companies to charge fees to employers and not employees, but did not report any enforcement of these guidelines in 2018 or 2019. The Secretariat of Labor and Social Security (STSS) utilized the Regulation for the Operation of Private Employment Agencies and Related Services, the Labor Inspection Law, and the Regulation of the Special Regime and Progressive Affiliation of Domestic Workers to prevent and protect individuals in private employment, including national and foreign national domestic workers, from trafficking. The STSS also implemented an agreement regarding temporary Honduran migrant workers in Canada, which, along with Honduras' consular network, monitored for trafficking crimes involving Hondurans abroad. The law for the recruitment and placement of Hondurans in the cruise industry also aimed to prevent trafficking crimes. The government made efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts.

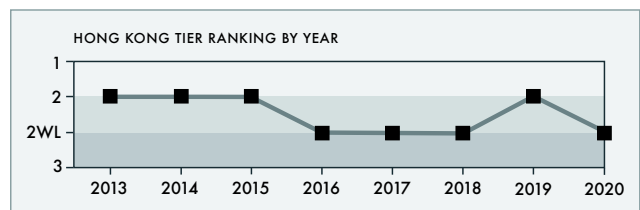
TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Honduras, and traffickers exploit victims from Honduras abroad. Traffickers, some of whom are family members or friends, exploit Honduran women and children in sex trafficking within the country and in other countries in the region such as Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Spain, and the United States. Traffickers particularly target women, children, LGBTI Hondurans, migrants, internally displaced persons, and individuals who are unemployed, in poverty, with low education levels, disabled, and lack access to healthcare. Traffickers exploit Honduran men, women, and children in forced labor in street vending, domestic service, drug trafficking, and the informal sector in their own country, and forced labor in other countries, particularly Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States. Children, including from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, particularly Miskito boys, are at risk for forced labor in the fishing, mining, construction, and hospitality industries. Children living on the streets are at risk for sex and labor trafficking; fines for child labor are not sufficient to deter violations. Criminal organizations, including gangs, exploit girls in sex trafficking, force children into street begging, and coerce and threaten young males and females to transport drugs, commit extortion, or commit acts of violence, including murder; this occurs primarily in urban areas, but one NGO reported an increase in gang activity in rural areas. Criminals expanded the use of social network platforms to recruit victims and continued to target vulnerable populations. Honduras is a destination for child sex tourists from Canada and the United States. Migrants from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, the Middle East, and South America who transit Honduras en route to the United States are vulnerable to being exploited in trafficking. Authorities noted family members took children into prisons to be exploited in commercial sex by prisoners, raising

concerns over the potential complicity of prison authorities. Overall corruption helped facilitate trafficking crimes.

HONG KONG: TIER 2 WATCH LIST

The Government of Hong Kong does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. These efforts included hiring and training 98 new employees within the immigration, customs, labor, and justice departments dedicated to trafficking issues. The government screened more than 7,000 vulnerable individuals for trafficking, the labor department (LD) introduced a victim identification mechanism to its division offices, and the government continued to provide anti-trafficking training to various officials. However, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. Authorities did not investigate, prosecute, or convict any cases of labor trafficking and investigated significantly fewer cases related to sex trafficking compared to the previous year. Despite the government screening for trafficking indicators, it identified only three victims of trafficking, a decrease from 18 in 2018, and did not provide any victims with government-funded services. Observers reported ineffective implementation of the screening mechanism and a lack of understanding of psychological trauma associated with trafficking continued to result in few victims identified. As in previous years, the government continued to penalize victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit. The government did not enact legislation to fully criminalize all forms of trafficking. Therefore Hong Kong was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enact a comprehensive anti-trafficking law that criminalizes all forms of trafficking in accordance with the definition set forth in the 2000 UN TIP Protocol. • Improve the quality of screenings conducted to identify trafficking victims. • Vigorously investigate trafficking cases, prosecute suspected sex and labor traffickers, and sentence convicted traffickers to significant prison terms. • Ensure authorities offer and refer trafficking victims to services. • Cease penalization of victims for unlawful acts traffickers compel them to commit and increase interagency coordination to ensure victims are not punished through immigration proceedings, including prior to investigating their traffickers. • Engage in continuous and regular collaboration with NGOs and social welfare experts to update anti-trafficking policies, to review victim-centered interview processes and investigations, to establish improved services for trafficking victims, and to create in-depth training programs for the judiciary, labor tribunal, and other task force stakeholders. • Ensure foreign victims are provided adequate services in Hong Kong, including prior to their repatriation. • Increase protections for foreign domestic workers to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking, including by removing worker-charged recruitment fees, eliminating the "two week rule," affording workers an option to live outside their place of employment, and creating legal maximum working hours. • Proactively investigate unscrupulous employment agencies and money lenders for their complicity in labor trafficking and sufficiently penalize convicted

agency operators. • Allow foreign victims to work and study in Hong Kong while participating in judicial proceedings against their traffickers.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts; the absence of laws that fully criminalize trafficking made it difficult to accurately assess the government's prosecution efforts compared to the previous year and made it difficult to determine which law enforcement actions involved human trafficking as defined by international law. Hong Kong law did not criminalize all forms of human trafficking, and the government relied on various provisions of laws relating to prostitution, immigration, employment, and physical abuse to prosecute trafficking crimes. Inconsistent with international law, Section 129 of the crimes ordinance, which criminalized "trafficking in persons to or from Hong Kong," required transnational movement and did not require the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Section 129 prescribed penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment, which were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with punishments prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Section 130 criminalized the harboring, controlling, or directing of a person for the purpose of prostitution and prescribed penalties of up to 14 years' imprisonment. Section 131 criminalized procuring a person to engage in commercial sex acts and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment. Section 137 criminalized living on the earnings of commercial sex acts of others and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The government reported investigating nine cases related to sex trafficking in 2019, a significant decrease compared with 136 investigations in 2018. The government did not report investigating, prosecuting, or convicting any cases of labor trafficking in 2019, an overall decrease compared with 14 investigations, two prosecutions, and zero convictions in 2018. The government did not report the number of sex trafficking prosecutions initiated in 2019, but it reported arresting five suspects (19 in 2018) during investigations for offenses related to sex trafficking, including for violations of section 137 of the crimes ordinance. Courts convicted 10 offenders for sex trafficking related crimes in 2019 (seven in 2018), and sentenced nine to terms of imprisonment ranging from approximately two to 10 months. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking offenses.

The justice department appointed two additional prosecutors to its designated team responsible for prosecuting trafficking related crimes, and the customs department established a four-person team to train and support front-line staff on trafficking issues. The police force hired an additional 26 officers dedicated to investigating trafficking and exploitation of foreign domestic workers. The government reported having designated points of contact for trafficking issues within relevant agencies since 2018; nonetheless, civil society organizations reported being unable to reach these contacts, including when attempting to refer victims to police, and some reported government officials were unable to ever direct them to a person responsible for trafficking. The immigration and customs departments continued to provide anti-trafficking training to new employees, and the government cosponsored a two-day training with the EU for law enforcement, labor, social welfare, and immigration officials. The police force continued to make an online training available for police officers, and 120 front-line police officers attended a training organized by the Organized Crime and Triad Bureau. In December 2019, the government developed and distributed an information packet on trafficking for officials likely to come into contact with victims.

Law enforcement officials often did not adequately investigate trafficking cases, including those referred to them by NGOs,

sometimes dropped cases with clear indicators of trafficking, and did not employ a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach when interviewing victims. The government reported utilizing a "joint investigative process" in trafficking cases to coordinate interviews of victims among law enforcement agencies; however, observers reported weak coordination between law enforcement agencies in practice, which resulted in agencies separately investigating different aspects of cases. Law enforcement also did not adequately investigate operators of unscrupulous employment agencies or money lenders for their roles in facilitating labor trafficking through debt-based coercion. The absence of laws criminalizing all forms of trafficking impeded officials' ability to investigate or charge suspected traffickers, especially in cases where the exploitation began in a victim's home country. This also resulted in the prosecution of trafficking crimes under laws with weak penalties. NGOs reported judicial officials lacked an awareness of trafficking. While the government reported granting immunity to two potential victims to allow them to testify in courts in 2019, well-founded fears of penalization reportedly resulted in many victims choosing not to report their exploitation or declining to cooperate with authorities in investigations.

PROTECTION

The government decreased efforts to protect victims and only identified three victims of trafficking in 2019. Police, immigration, and customs officials utilized a two-tiered identification mechanism to screen vulnerable populations for victims of trafficking. In December 2019, officials at the LD's 10 labor relation division offices began to use the government's standard screening mechanism. Officials referred potential victims for a full identification "debriefing" after determining whether an individual met at least one of seven indicators listed on the standard screening form of the first tier of the identification mechanism. Officials screened more than 7,000 individuals, referred 93 for "full debriefings," but identified only three victims in 2019, a decrease compared with 18 in 2018. Two victims identified by authorities were exploited in sex trafficking, and it was unclear if the third victim was subjected to labor or sex trafficking. The standard screening form listed vulnerable populations authorities were required to screen, but it did not include any groups that would include Hong Kong citizens. The immigration department established a unit in December 2019 to increase oversight of the visa application review process of foreign domestic workers to help facilitate the ability of officials to screen for indicators of trafficking among foreign domestic worker visa applications; in the two months after its establishment, the unit processed 400 cases and provided initial screenings of 140 cases, but it did not identify any victims of trafficking. Observers reported ineffective implementation of the screening mechanism and a lack of understanding of psychological trauma associated with trafficking resulted in few victims identified. NGOs reported law enforcement interviews of victims during the identification process lacked a trauma-informed approach and exacerbated victims' emotional distress. A local NGO reported law enforcement subjected victims to lengthy interviews, sometimes without adequate interpretation or appropriate staff to interview female sex trafficking victims. Some civil society organizations reported that increased collaboration by the government would improve the victim identification process and lead to more effective victim protection efforts.

Identified victims preferred to receive services provided by foreign consulates or NGOs rather than services offered by the government. The government partially subsidized six NGO-operated and three government-operated shelters that served victims of violence, abuse, and exploitation, including trafficking victims. These shelters could provide temporary accommodation, counseling, and medical and psychological services to local and

foreign victims, regardless of gender or age. However, contacts reported no trafficking victims stayed in government shelters, likely due to fears that the government would not provide adequate services or compensation. Although the government assisted two foreign domestic workers to return to Hong Kong to serve as witnesses in trials against employment agencies for overcharging fees, no trafficking victims benefited from this assistance. To enable foreign victims to temporarily remain in Hong Kong, the government could provide visa extensions with fee waivers and could provide victims who were foreign domestic workers with permission to change their employer; the government granted one identified victim a visa extension with fee waiver in 2019. Observers noted inconsistent coordination between immigration and police made it difficult for victims to obtain visa extensions in practice. In addition, victims allowed temporary residency via visa extensions could not work or study in Hong Kong. Hong Kong law allowed victims to seek compensation from traffickers through civil suits and labor tribunals. Nonetheless, observers reported poor translation services, a lack of trained attorneys, the inability to work while awaiting a decision, and judges' inexperience with forced labor cases sometimes impaired victims' attempts to claim back wages or restitution through labor tribunals and deterred some from bringing claims forward.

The government continued to penalize trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, and observers reported authorities were more likely to penalize victims than their traffickers. Ineffective victim identification and interagency collaboration on trafficking reportedly resulted in the government initiating immigration proceedings against victims rather than investigating or prosecuting their traffickers. Some law enforcement officials also reportedly threatened victims with penalization during victim identification interviews. The government continued to intercept non-local child victims of sex trafficking during anti-vice operations—15 in 2019 compared with 11 in 2018—and failed to identify them as trafficking victims under the screening mechanism or provide them with adequate assistance. Authorities prosecuted one of these victims for an immigration violation and sentenced them to a four-week suspended sentence. Although the government coordinated with the authorities in the receiving country to repatriate these victims, it did not report providing them with sufficient stabilizing services following their initial identification in Hong Kong.

PREVENTION

The government maintained efforts to prevent trafficking; however, the government continued to publicly deny that trafficking is a prevalent crime in Hong Kong. The government continued to make efforts to implement the 2018 “Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Helpers.” Nonetheless, observers reported a lack of meaningful progress to combat trafficking in practice, and that the plan did not sufficiently address sex trafficking. An anti-trafficking steering committee led by the Chief Secretary for Administration and an inter-departmental working group led by the security bureau continued to meet. Following the allocation of 62.23 million Hong Kong dollars (\$7.99 million) to the government's annual budget during the previous reporting period, the government created 98 new positions within the police, immigration, customs, labor, and justice departments dedicated to trafficking issues. To improve collaboration with civil society, the government held meetings with individual NGOs and international organizations to discuss issues of concern and future collaboration; however, it was unclear if these efforts resulted in concrete and measurable outcomes to combat trafficking during the reporting period. The government did not conduct campaigns to raise awareness of sex trafficking. To improve awareness of the rights of foreign domestic workers and the responsibilities of

employers, the government continued to distribute information packets to workers and employers, publish advertisements in Filipino and Indonesian language newspapers, operate workers' rights information kiosks in public areas, work with the Philippine and Indonesian consulates to provide briefings to newly arriving domestic workers, and publish translated versions of standard employment contracts in 11 foreign languages. The government distributed new information cards created by an international organization that listed information on support services available to foreign domestic workers and trafficking victims.

The government's process for evaluating non-refoulement claims, which did not allow claimants to legally work in Hong Kong, made some refugees vulnerable to trafficking. The government's policies requiring foreign domestic workers to live with their employers and to return to their home countries within two weeks after their contracts' termination increased the ability of abusive employers and unscrupulous employment agencies to subject workers to trafficking. Although the immigration department allowed some exploited workers to change their employers without leaving Hong Kong, observers reported the “two week rule” continued to deter workers from reporting or exiting exploitative conditions. The requirement that workers live with their employers enabled exploitative employers to limit workers' freedom of movement and communications and sometimes required workers to live in inadequate conditions. The lack of regulations setting a maximum number of legal working hours for foreign domestic workers also contributed to their vulnerability. The government reported convicting 34 employers of foreign domestic workers for illegally using workers to perform duties outside their contracts (29 in 2018), and convicting three for non- or under-payment of wages (two in 2018); sentences included fines and up to two months' imprisonment. A local NGO noted the government allowed employers who had previously been convicted for exploiting foreign domestic workers to continue to hire workers. The government offered visa extensions with fee waivers to 141 foreign domestic workers determined to be victims of illegal conduct to serve as witnesses (160 in 2018).

Hong Kong law permitted employment agencies to charge job seekers, including foreign domestic workers, up to 10 percent of their first month's salary in recruitment fees. Since enforcement of this rule was lacking, agencies often charged much higher fees and confiscated workers passports and/or contracts as collateral, which perpetuated debt-based coercion. The government required employment agencies to comply with a code of practice covering statutory requirements and standards for Hong Kong-based employment agencies. Despite being a violation of the code of practice, observers reported money lenders and employment agencies often operated at the same address without consequence; this enabled employment agencies complicit in labor trafficking to indebt workers through loans for recruitment fees that were often beyond the legal limits. The Employment Agencies Administration (EAA) conducted approximately 2,000 inspections of employment agencies in 2019. The LD established a team in the EAA in 2019 to increase enforcement of the Employment Ordinance. However, the EAA lacked sufficient resources, and inspections of agencies were ineffective and often only consisted of undetailed reviews of documentation. In addition, observers reported the EAA did not proactively investigate unscrupulous agencies and typically required a victim to make a complaint against an agency before initiating an investigation. The EAA was not regularly open on Sundays—the only non-work day for most foreign domestic workers—preventing some workers from filing complaints. To facilitate the ability of foreign domestic helpers to make inquiries and complaints, LD operated an online portal as well as a 24-hour hotline available in nine languages. In 2019, the LD convicted 10 agencies for overcharging workers, operating without a license, or other violations (10 agencies convicted in 2018). The government

imposed a fine of 92,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$11,820) on one agency and its director for overcharging fees, and imposed a fine of 120,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$15,410) on one unlicensed agency. LD cited non-compliance of the code of practice in decisions to revoke or reject the renewal of licenses of 13 employment agencies in 2019 (11 in 2018). Nevertheless, some employment agencies reportedly continued to operate—and unlawfully retain workers' passports with impunity—after losing their licenses, sometimes reopening under a different name. In addition, NGOs reported fines and other penalties given to employment agencies exploiting foreign domestic workers were too light and did not act as a deterrent. Despite having the legal discretion to revoke agency licenses administratively, observers reported the EAA over-relied on criminal convictions of agencies to do so. The government made some efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, including through education programs for children in local schools. The government did not provide anti-trafficking training to its personnel posted overseas.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

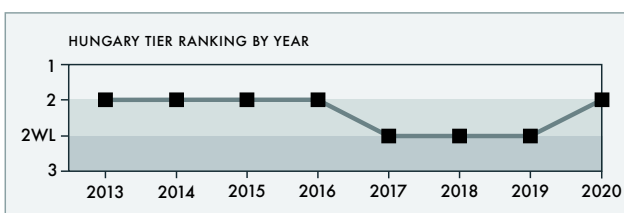
As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Hong Kong, and traffickers exploit victims from Hong Kong abroad. Victims include citizens from mainland China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Uganda, Kenya, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries, as well as countries in South Asia, Africa, and South America. Traffickers exploit foreign women, including from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia in sex trafficking. There were reports that some women in Hong Kong—often with the assistance of their families—deceive Indian and Pakistani men into arranged marriages that involve forced domestic service, bonded labor in construction and other physically demanding industries, and other forms of abuse via exploitative contracts. Reports indicated drug trafficking syndicates coerced South American women, whom Hong Kong authorities subsequently arrested, to carry drugs into Hong Kong. Some employment agencies reportedly hire foreign domestic workers under false pretenses and force them into commercial sex. Traffickers recruit victims from the Philippines, South America, and mainland China using false promises of lucrative employment and force them into commercial sex, sometimes through debt-based coercion. “Compensated dating” continues to facilitate commercial sexual exploitation of Hong Kong children and adults, making them vulnerable to trafficking. Traffickers exploited victims from Hong Kong in North America in commercial sex.

Traffickers exploit migrant workers in construction, electronic recycling facilities, nursing homes, and private homes. Approximately 400,000 foreign domestic workers, primarily from Indonesia and the Philippines, work in Hong Kong. Some foreign domestic workers become victims of debt bondage in the private homes in which they are employed. A 2018 NGO task force survey of migrant workers found one-third of Indonesian workers in Hong Kong were asked to sign debt agreements as conditions of their employment. In addition, 56 percent of surveyed workers reported having to pay illegal recruitment fees, and 24 percent had their personal documents withheld by employment agencies or employers. A 2016 NGO report estimated as many as one in six foreign domestic workers are victims of labor exploitation in Hong Kong. Some operators of employment agencies subject victims to labor trafficking through debt-based coercion by charging workers job placement fees in excess of legal limits and sometimes withholding their identity documents. The accumulated debts sometimes amount to a significant portion of the workers' first-year salary, and unscrupulous agencies sometimes compel workers to take loans from money lenders to pay excessive fees; a 2017 study estimated foreign domestic workers spend up to 35 percent of their monthly salaries paying back money lenders. Some employers, money lenders, and employment agencies illegally withhold

passports, employment contracts, or other possessions until the debt is paid. Some workers are required to work up to 17 hours per day; experience verbal, sexual, or physical abuse in the home; live in inadequate conditions; and/or are not granted a legally required weekly day off. Some foreign domestic workers sign contracts to work in Hong Kong, but upon arrival traffickers coerce or lure them to work in mainland China, the Middle East, or Russia. As demand for foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong increased, NGOs reported workers from countries other than Indonesia and the Philippines were increasingly vulnerable to exploitation.

HUNGARY: TIER 2

The Government of Hungary does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Hungary was upgraded to Tier 2. These efforts included investigating more trafficking cases, including international investigations; prosecuting considerably more traffickers; sentencing all convicted traffickers to significant prison terms; and extraditing more suspected traffickers. Additionally, the National Police appointed specialized trafficking investigators at each of its 19 county headquarters, as well as in the Budapest office. Furthermore, the government amended legislation to include a non-punishment provision and a general protection measure for child trafficking victims and reported identifying more trafficking victims. The government also adopted a national anti-trafficking strategy for 2020-2023 and allocated dedicated financial resources to its related action plan. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government's trafficking victim identification mechanism did not apply to foreign victims without legal residence. As a result, government officials did not adequately screen for trafficking indicators or identify victims among third-country nationals, such as asylum-seekers in the transit zones, as well as other vulnerable populations, including domestic workers or children in state-run institutions. The government lacked a framework for identifying, referring, or assisting child victims. Overall services for victims remained scarce, uncoordinated, and inadequate, especially for foreigners and children, for whom there were no dedicated shelters; these gaps left victims at risk of re-trafficking.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Screen for trafficking indicators and proactively identify potential victims, especially among vulnerable populations, such as migrants and asylum-seekers, children in state-run institutions and orphanages, domestic workers, and individuals in commercial sex. • Significantly increase the quality and availability of specialized victim services for adults and children, including by expanding the national referral mechanism (NRM) to formally include foreign victims without legal residency, and provide sufficient funding to NGOs to offer victim care. • Develop and fund protocols for identification and referral and enhance training for law enforcement and social workers on recognizing indicators of