

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	743
Land:	Tyrkiet
Kilde:	US Department of State (USDOS)
Titel:	2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkey (Türkiye)
Udgivet:	29. september 0225
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	8. oktober 2025

2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkey (Türkiye)

TÜRKIYE (Tier 2)

The Government of Türkiye 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 with the previous reporting period; therefore, Türkiye remained on Tier 2. These efforts included prosecuting more alleged traffickers and increasing personnel available to provide victims with legal representation and psycho-social support. The government updated victim identification SOPs and allocated more funding for international organizations working on victim protection. The Ankara Municipal government allocated more funds for cash assistance to trafficking victims, the government improved the process to acquire work permits and continued efforts to develop a NAP. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government investigated significantly fewer cases and convicted the fewest number of traffickers since 2014. The government identified fewer victims, interviewed fewer potential victims, and decreased funding for victim protection. Authorities inappropriately penalized victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. The government rarely partnered with civil society on victim protection efforts. Courts have never reported awarding restitution or compensation to trafficking victims, and the government's anti-trafficking coordinating mechanisms did not meet for the second consecutive year.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Cease supporting and coordinating with non-state armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers, including in support roles.
- Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, including those involving complicit officials, and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers, which should involve significant prison terms.
- Expand and institutionalize training for investigators, prosecutors, and judges on victim-centered approaches to trafficking cases, including advanced training on trafficking investigations and prosecutions.
- Establish formalized mechanisms to refer trafficking cases to trained prosecutors and judges.
- Increase and strengthen specialized services, including shelter and psycho-social care for all victims.
- Implement a systematic victim-witness assistance program to increase protective services for victims participating in criminal justice proceedings.
- Increase efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims by screening for trafficking indicators among vulnerable populations.
- Increase partnerships with civil society on victim identification and protection efforts.
- Train judges on restitution in criminal cases, establish procedures to seize assets from traffickers, and create effective methods to allocate restitution in a timely manner.
- Inform all identified victims of their right to pursue compensation and encourage them to do so.
- Strengthen measures to prevent the use of forced labor.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts.

Article 80 of the penal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of eight to 12 years' imprisonment and a fine, which were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other grave crimes, such as rape.

In 2024, authorities investigated 93 cases (45 sex trafficking, 20 labor trafficking, and 28 unspecified forms of trafficking), a significant decrease compared with 291 investigations in 2023. Authorities continued to investigate 293 cases initiated in previous years. The Chief Prosecutor's Offices (CPO) prosecuted 204 alleged traffickers, compared with 198 alleged traffickers in 2023. CPO continued to prosecute 170 cases involving 965 alleged traffickers initiated in previous years. Courts convicted 25 traffickers, a significant decrease compared with 55 convictions in 2023. The government did not provide sentencing data for convicted traffickers. Courts continued to acquit most alleged traffickers; courts acquitted 23 of the 48 alleged traffickers (48 percent) prosecuted in 2024, 127 of the 174 alleged traffickers (73 percent) prosecuted in 2023, and 256 of the 328 alleged traffickers (78 percent) prosecuted in 2022. As in prior years, the government did not disaggregate prosecution and conviction data by type of trafficking. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking crimes; however, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns. The government provided support to elements of the Syrian National Army (SNA), a coalition of non-state armed groups in Syria, that recruited and used child soldiers. Media reported Turkish officials allegedly engaged in actions related to human trafficking involving a domestic worker.

Turkish National Police (TNP) maintained the Department of Migrant Smuggling and Border Gates (DMSBG) that specialized in trafficking investigations. DMSBG maintained 141 officers at headquarters and offices in all 81 provinces with approximately 1,600 officers. DMSBG conducted 217 proactive investigations on unregistered businesses for indicators of trafficking, compared with 865 investigations in 2023. The Gendarmerie maintained the Department of Counter Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking (DCST) with jurisdiction to investigate trafficking in rural areas. The Gendarmerie maintained specialized officers in all 81 provinces and trafficking working groups in 33 provinces identified as "high risk" to share intelligence and coordinate investigations and inspections. Prosecutors often referred cases to general investigative departments, who lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to investigate trafficking, rather than the specialized TNP or Gendarmerie units. Some prosecutors in Ankara and Istanbul specialized in trafficking but most prosecutors and judges lacked training and expertise. As a result, authorities often dropped or reclassified trafficking cases to crimes with lesser penalties, such as "incitement of prostitution" (Article 227), "violation of freedom of work and labor" (Article 117), "migrant smuggling" (Article 79), and "exploitation of begging" (Article 229). Judges continued to acquit the majority of alleged traffickers due to a lack of evidence, particularly a lack of testimony, as victims and witnesses rarely chose to participate in court proceedings or foreign victims were swiftly deported after identification. Additionally, prosecutors and judges did not consistently ensure the continued inclusion of testimony for victims who returned to their country of origin. Such actions undercut efforts to hold traffickers accountable, weakened deterrence, created potential security and safety concerns for victims, and did not adequately address the nature of the crime. The government provided various anti-trafficking trainings to the Gendarmerie, immigration officers, judges, labor inspectors, prosecutors, municipal police, social security auditors, and the TNP. The government cooperated with foreign authorities on 11 trafficking investigations.

PROTECTION

The government decreased victim protection efforts.

The government identified 183 victims, compared with 223 victims in 2023. Of the 183 victims, traffickers exploited 54 victims in sex trafficking, 49 in labor trafficking, and 76 in an unspecified form of trafficking; 89 were women, 20 were men, 52 were girls, and 22 were boys; and 151 were foreign victims. The government maintained SOPs for identifying and referring victims to assistance and required first responders to refer potential victims to the Presidency of Migration

Management (PMM), which officially recognized victims. The government reported updating victim identification SOPs and PMM maintained two identification experts in each of the 81 provincial offices to interview victims; PMM interviewed 8,251 potential victims, compared with 20,335 potential victims in 2023. PMM interviewed child victims in the presence of a psychologist or social worker. Law enforcement officials and other first responders did not engage in consistent proactive victim identification efforts in communities highly vulnerable to trafficking.

The government allocated 1,517,200 lira (\$42,900) to international organizations to support victim protection, compared with approximately 896,640 lira (\$25,350) in 2023. The government did not provide funding to domestic anti-trafficking NGOs. PMM allocated 937,500 lira (\$26,510) to the anti-trafficking shelter in Ankara, compared with 959,460 lira (\$27,130) in 2023. PMM also allocated 579,960 lira (\$16,400) to the anti-trafficking shelter in Kirikkale, compared with 768,576 lira (\$21,730) in 2023. These expenses included operational costs, vehicles, food, offices, and cleaning supplies. The law entitled officially identified trafficking victims to services, including shelter, medical and psycho-social care, work options, education, translation services, temporary residency, repatriation assistance, vocational training, and legal counseling; the government provided support services to 53 victims (299 victims in 2023). The Kirikkale and Ankara Municipal governments continued to disperse 1,000 lira (\$28) per month to adult victims with an additional 250 lira (\$7) for each of their children staying at the anti-trafficking shelters; 32 victims received financial assistance (56 in 2023). The Ankara Municipal government allocated 69,000 lira (\$1,940) for cash assistance, compared with 47,550 lira (\$1,340) in 2023. The Kirikkale Municipal government reported victims stayed in the shelter for only a short term and, as a result, did not allocate any funds for cash assistance, compared with 308,079 lira (\$8,710) in 2023.

PMM operated specialized shelters for foreign female trafficking victims in Ankara and Kirikkale. The Kirikkale shelter had the capacity to accommodate 20 victims, while the Ankara shelters had capacity for 30 victims. PMM maintained a manual for shelter staff with SOPs on service provision and rules for shelter operations. PMM-run shelters allowed victims to stay up to three years and re-evaluated their needs every six months. The shelter in Ankara allowed freedom of movement; however, there were security requirements. Experts continued to report a lack of capacity to provide specialized support to all victims, including delays in accessing healthcare or obtaining residence permits. In 2024, GRETA reported PMM-run shelters improved “material conditions for victims and their children,” including a new playground, library, study room, and improved accessibility for victims with physical disabilities. The Ministry of Family and Social Services (MOFSS) accommodated female Turkish victims in its 145 shelters for victims of violence with the capacity to accommodate 3,540 victims. Observers reported MOFSS-run shelters were inadequate for trafficking victims due to a lack of specialized knowledge and access to appropriate support services. The government provided ad hoc specialized support to male victims in cooperation with civil society but did not provide specialized support for child victims. MOFSS accommodated child victims in childcare institutions and the government-operated Monitoring Centers for Children that provided support to child victims of sexual abuse, including trafficking. The absence of a digital case management system created inefficiencies in coordinating victim protection efforts across relevant ministries and international organizations. GRETA and civil society actors continued to express concern that the government’s victim protection efforts were not sufficiently inclusive of NGOs, including funding of civil society organizations.

The government reported training judges and prosecutors on non-penalization of victims; however, due to inconsistent implementation of victim identification SOPs, authorities detained and/or deported unidentified victims for unlawful acts committed solely as a direct result of being trafficked. The law entitled foreign victims to a temporary residence permit for 30 days, which authorities could extend up to three years with the option to apply for a work permit; the government did not grant any residence permits in 2024. PMM, in cooperation with an international organization, operated repatriation centers, covered costs, and maintained repatriation protocols; however, the government did not repatriate any foreign national victims in 2024 (100 in 2023). The government did not maintain policies to encourage victims to participate in prosecutions, including after the repatriation of foreign national victims and witnesses. The criminal procedure code allowed victims to participate in the victimwitness protection program only in cases related to organized crime. Judicial Support and Victims Services Offices provided legal assistance and

psycho-social support at 171 courthouses (167 in 2023). The government also maintained 170 “forensic interview rooms” in 162 courthouses, which allowed victims to testify in private and/or remotely to reduce retraumatization. The government did not report how many victims received legal support or participated in criminal proceedings for the third consecutive year, compared with 40 victims in 2021. Victims could obtain restitution through criminal proceedings or compensation through civil suits. Criminal courts did not issue restitution, and recommended victims pursue compensation through civil suits; however, civil courts often required a criminal conviction, which could take years, before awarding victims with compensation. Courts have never reported awarding restitution or compensation to trafficking victims.

PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts.

The Coordination Board for Combating Trafficking coordinated interagency anti-trafficking efforts, but did not meet in 2024 or 2023. The government has remained without a NAP since 2009. The government conducted research, held workshops, and drafted a 2025-2030 NAP which remained pending approval. The Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution continued to act as the national rapporteur for anti-trafficking and was responsible for monitoring government anti-trafficking efforts. The government organized awareness campaigns targeting the public and students. PMM maintained a 24-hour migration-related national hotline in seven languages, whose operators were also trained to handle trafficking-related calls; the hotline received 153 trafficking-related calls (1,515 in 2023).

The law required recruitment agencies to maintain a license, approve all contracts with the government, seek worker agreement in contract changes, and provide foreign workers with information on trafficking. The government improved the process for foreign workers to acquire work permits. However, resources and inspections were insufficient to effectively monitor and enforce prohibitions against the use of forced child labor or informal work. Labor laws did not apply to private agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers, and inspectors did not generally visit unless a complaint was filed, increasing agricultural workers’ vulnerability to trafficking. Labor inspectors were provided procedures for handling potential trafficking cases and conducted routine inspections of worksites; however, the government did not report identifying trafficking crimes or referring any potential trafficking crimes to law enforcement. The law allowed both Syrians under temporary protection and non-Syrian conditional refugees the right to work, provided they were registered in the province in which they wished to work for at least the preceding six months. Applying for a work permit was the responsibility of the employer; however, experts reported that few did so due to burdensome and costly procedures, which the government made an effort to address with a new work permit process in 2024. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts.

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 Turkish victims in sex trafficking and forced labor in Türkiye. Trafficking victims in Türkiye are primarily from Central and South Asia, Eastern Europe, and Syria. Of the foreign national victims identified in 2024, most were Syrian, followed by Afghan, Uzbekistani, Kyrgyzstani, and Turkmen. Romani children working on the streets in major cities as garbage collectors, musicians, and beggars are vulnerable to forced labor. Traffickers increasingly use online methods, including social media, dating sites, and online job search platforms, to recruit victims. Agricultural workers, particularly working on hazelnut farms, are vulnerable to forced labor with low pay, wage withholding, long hours, and hazardous working conditions, and at times, middlemen coerce farmers into indentured servitude with loans between harvests. Similarly, workers in garment factories are vulnerable to forced labor and face dangerous work conditions, low wages or withheld

wages, and harassment. Traffickers reportedly exploit Turkish men in forced labor in Israel, Moldova, and Montenegro. The Kurdistan Workers' Party, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, recruited and forcibly abducted children to use as child soldiers in previous years. Reports indicate some women detained by non-state armed groups in Syria were transported and exploited in Türkiye. As in previous years, the government provided support to elements of the Syrian National Army (SNA), a coalition of nonstate armed groups in Syria that recruited and used child soldiers. However, the government assisted the SNA in decreasing the number of children recruited or used as child soldiers by more than 50 percent, including encouraging the SNA to sign a UN action plan in June 2024 to address the problem of child soldiers.

The February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye resulted in approximately three million IDPs, a population vulnerable to trafficking. Türkiye continues to host a large refugee population that remains highly vulnerable to trafficking; approximately 2.9 million displaced Syrians and over 200,000 refugees of other nationalities resided in Türkiye during the reporting period. Syrian girls in Türkiye are forced into marriages in unofficial religious ceremonies, particularly in poor and rural regions, and are subsequently subjected to domestic servitude and sex trafficking. Syrian and other refugees, including children, engaging in street begging and reportedly working in agriculture, restaurants, textile factories, markets, shops, and other workplaces are vulnerable to forced labor. Reports indicated 32 regime-affiliated Cuban medical professionals traveled to Türkiye to help in the aftermath of the 2023 earthquakes. The Cuban regime may have forced Cuban regime-affiliated professionals in Türkiye to work.