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USDOS – US Department of State

2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Angola

ANGOLA: Tier 2

The government of Angola 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 Angola was upgraded to Tier 2. These efforts included prosecuting more than four times the number of traffickers, taking law enforcement action against one official allegedly complicit in trafficking crimes and investigating another, and significantly increasing cross-border law enforcement cooperation. Law enforcement and social services implemented the standardized mechanism for victim identification and referred all victims to protective services—a notable increase from referring only half of identified victims to care last year. The government also passed a law expanding protective services, including immigration relief, for foreign victims and victim witnesses. The anti-trafficking commission finalized and launched a five-year national action plan and devoted resources to its implementation, including creating new line items in the national budget. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Social services officials did not screen vulnerable populations, especially migrants along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and individuals in commercial sex in Luanda. In addition, the government did not have procedures in place to oversee and regulate labor recruitment beyond periodic labor inspections.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Implement and train front-line officials on standardized procedures for the proactive identification of victims among vulnerable groups, including foreign nationals such as Congolese, Namibians, and North Koreans, and refer victims to appropriate services. • Sentence convicted traffickers to significant prison terms. • Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, especially sex trafficking and labor trafficking in the construction sector and in animal herding. • Utilize the Southern African Development Community (SADC) data collection tool to improve efforts to collect, synthesize, and analyze nationwide law enforcement and victim protection data. • Increase efforts to provide shelter, counseling, and medical care for trafficking victims either directly or in partnership with NGOs. • Increase proactive engagement of the inter-ministerial commission to engage on anti-trafficking efforts. • Train law enforcement officials on the 2014 money laundering law's anti trafficking provisions.

PROSECUTION

The government increased law enforcement efforts. The 2014 Law on the Criminalization of Infractions Surrounding Money Laundering criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Article 18 criminalized slavery and servitude, as well as the buying and selling of a child under 14 years of age for adoption or for slavery, with a penalty of seven to 15 years' imprisonment. Article 19 criminalized the trafficking of adults and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labor, or trafficking in organs and prescribed penalties of eight to 12 years' imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently stringent, and with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with the penalties for other serious crimes, such as rape. Additional provisions in the law also criminalized forms of sex trafficking. Article 20 criminalized enticing or forcing a person to practice prostitution in a foreign country, with a penalty of two to 10 years' imprisonment. Article 21 criminalized pimping using force, fraud, or coercion of adults and prescribed penalties of one to 6 years' imprisonment. Article 22 criminalized “pimping of minors” under the age of 18 and prescribed penalties of two to 10 years' imprisonment; if force, fraud or coercion was used or the child was less than 14 years old, the penalties were increased to five to 12 years' imprisonment. Article 23 made it a crime to entice children to engage in prostitution in a foreign country, with sentences of three to 12 years' imprisonment; with force, fraud or coercion, the sentence was increased to three to 15 years' imprisonment.

The government investigated 15 potential trafficking cases, 13 for forced labor, one for sex trafficking, and one for an unknown type of trafficking, compared with 23 investigations in the previous reporting period. Eleven of the cases originated in Cunene Province, which borders Namibia, two cases were in Zaire province, and the provinces of Huila and Luanda each had one case. The investigations involved at least 70 potential child and adult victims, primarily Angolan, and at least 21 perpetrators, primarily from Angola, Namibia, or the DRC. The government prosecuted 27 potential traffickers, a significant increase compared with prosecuting five alleged traffickers in the previous reporting period. The government convicted 10 traffickers—one more than during the previous reporting period. Nine of the 10 convictions were for an unknown type of trafficking that occurred in Cunene province and one conviction was for child sex trafficking in Luanda; sentences ranged from nine months to three years'

imprisonment. In one child sex trafficking case involving a 16-year-old girl, the court sentenced the trafficker to only one year. The government charged an Angolan border guard in Cunene province for allegedly conspiring with a citizen of Namibia to force a woman and five boys into exploitative labor. In February, the government charged an Angolan army officer with smuggling and an investigation into a potential trafficking nexus was ongoing at the close of the reporting period. In March, the government charged five police officers with trafficking in persons, forced labor, organized crime, and falsification of documents for allegedly conspiring to force six Angolan minors to beg in Portugal, Italy, and France. The Angolan government cooperated with European authorities to share evidence and in order to locate one victim. The other five children were in protective care in Angola.

In coordination with international organizations, the government led training for front-line responders on all aspects of combating human trafficking, including for border guard and migration officers, investigative police, prosecutors, judges, and NGO legal counsel. In partnership with an international organization, the government trained 157 officials on the SADC data collection tool, which resulted in more comprehensive reporting of law enforcement data during the reporting period. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MJHR) conducted three workshops on victim identification for Ministry of Interior (MOI) officers. The MJHR also trained 298 police officers at the police institute, and the National Police Academy continued to train officers on human trafficking provisions in the anti-trafficking law. In partnership with an international organization, MOI conducted a workshop for 25 interagency participants for the harmonization of the national referral mechanism. The MJHR trained 50 officials at the international airport in Luanda. The government increased joint law enforcement cooperation during the reporting period, actively engaging with authorities in Brazil, DRC, France, Namibia, Portugal, South Africa, and Zambia on investigations of potential trafficking cases. Angolan and Portuguese officials used their judicial cooperation agreement to facilitate the return of three Angolan children from Portugal; a second investigation was ongoing at the close of the reporting period. The government worked with international experts to improve law enforcement cooperation with regard to transnational criminal networks.

PROTECTION

The government increased protection efforts. The government identified and referred to care 36 trafficking victims, compared to 35 victims during the previous reporting period. Of those identified, 34 were children, including 17 girls and 17 boys, and two were sex trafficking victims of unknown age and gender. The government provided protective services for all victims, including foster care and family tracing services, an increase compared with providing only half of identified victims with care during the previous reporting period. The government increased funding across the national budget, including creating a separate line item for anti-trafficking activities. The government continued to widely distribute and use anti-trafficking manuals for law enforcement and civil society on the proactive identification of victims, which included procedures and best practices for interviewing potential victims, screening vulnerable groups, assessing risk, referring victims to protective services, and victim-centered protection guidelines. The government continued to report it had formal guidelines in six of Angola's 18 provinces to refer trafficking victims to care.

The National Institute of Children (INAC) received referrals of child victims and managed child support centers in all 18 provinces that provided food, shelter, basic education, and family reunification for crime victims younger than age 18. The Ministry of Social Action, Family and the Promotion of Women managed a national network of safe houses for women, counseling centers, and children's centers, which trafficking victims could access. The anti-trafficking commission completed a rapid assessment of protection resources available for trafficking victims, including the mapping of 114 counseling centers and residential shelters for child and adult trafficking victims throughout the country, and worked closely with civil society actors to strengthen cooperation. The government coordinated with the government of the DRC and partially funded the repatriation of a Congolese child trafficking victim. The government also cooperated with the government of Portugal to facilitate the return of three Angolan children to Angola. Upon their arrival, the government placed the children in a shelter while MJHR and INAC officials assessed the possibility of family reunification, ultimately placing them with their families and carrying out regular home visits to ensure the children received proper care. The government increased protections for foreign victims and witnesses by passing a law providing both groups, regardless of nationality, with access to immigration relief including residency, the right to seek asylum, government-provided legal representation, immunity from trafficking crimes, medical and mental health services, as well as financial support. The law provided child victims with family tracing assistance and access to education while in Angola. It also ensured that victims were only repatriated when their safety could be assured and allowed victims the choice to return to their home country independent of court proceedings. The government encouraged victim cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases and the new law admitted live teleconference testimony in court, providing victims the option to testify remotely in order to avoid interacting with their traffickers. In the absence of screening for indicators of trafficking, particularly on Angola's border with the DRC, authorities may have penalized victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent human trafficking. The inter-ministerial commission—established in 2014 under the direction of the MJHR and the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration—finalized and launched a comprehensive five-year national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and secured funding to implement activities within the plan. The Inter-Ministerial Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons met internally. The MJHR organized four lectures to raise awareness among students and civil society of the dangers of trafficking. INAC conducted several trainings to raise awareness about child trafficking and distributed thousands

of brochures in schools, children’s shelters, and bus stations. The national police service sent text messages to citizens to raise awareness of the risk and vulnerabilities of traffickers utilizing telephonic messaging services. The MJHR gave an anti-trafficking lecture to 153 university students, spoke about trafficking in a radio broadcast and trained members of the community at youth community centers throughout the country. In February, following a speech by the Secretary of State for Human Rights, a state-owned newspaper published an article highlighting trafficking cases that had occurred within Angolan borders, raising awareness of widely-accepted exploitative practices like non- or under-payment of agricultural workers and the exploitation of rural youth in domestic servitude and alerting readers to the dangers of sex trafficking. The government entered its first three cases into the SADC regional data collection tool, which was launched during the previous reporting period, and coordinated closely with an international organization to report and resolve technical issues. In coordination with international organizations, the government continued to implement the Blue Heart Campaign to raise awareness about trafficking among the general public. The government did not have procedures in place to oversee and regulate labor recruitment beyond periodic labor inspections and reported it conducted 5,461 general labor inspections during the reporting period. The government closed informal diamond trading houses and unlicensed artisanal mine operations, and continued to implement new regulations to license artisanal mines where individuals were vulnerable to trafficking. The government opened civil registry offices in maternity hospitals throughout Angola’s 18 provinces to facilitate issuance of temporary identification documents and launched a mobile campaign to rapidly issue identification documents in specific pilot areas. The MJHR operated a hotline for potential victims and for the public to report suspected trafficking cases, but it did not report how many calls it received or whether the government identified any victims via the hotline. The government did not report any efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. The government did not provide anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Angola, and traffickers exploit victims from Angola abroad. Traffickers exploit Angolans, including minors, in forced labor in the brick-making, domestic service, construction, agriculture, and artisanal diamond mining sectors within the country. Angolan girls as young as 13 years old are victims of sex trafficking. Angolan adults use children younger than age 12 for forced criminal activity, because children cannot be criminally prosecuted. The provinces of Luanda, Benguela, and the border provinces of Cunene, Lunda Norte, Namibe, Uige, and Zaire are the most high-threat areas for trafficking activities. Traffickers take some Angolan boys to Namibia for forced labor in cattle herding, and force others to serve as couriers to transport illicit goods as part of a scheme to skirt import fees in cross-border trade with Namibia. Traffickers exploit Angolan women and children in forced labor in domestic service and sex trafficking in South Africa, Namibia, and European countries, including the Netherlands and Portugal.

Women from Brazil, Cuba, DRC, Namibia, and Vietnam engaged in commercial sex in Angola may be victims of sex trafficking. Traffickers exploit Brazilian, Chinese, Kenyan, Namibian, Southeast Asian, and possibly Congolese migrants in forced labor in Angola’s construction industry; traffickers may withhold passports, threaten violence, deny food, and confine victims. Traffickers coerce workers to continue work in unsafe conditions, which at times reportedly resulted in death. Chinese companies that have large construction or mining contracts bring Chinese workers to Angola; some companies do not disclose the terms and conditions of the work at the time of recruitment. North Koreans and Cubans working in Angola may have been forced to work by the North Korean and Cuban governments respectively. Undocumented Congolese migrants, including children, enter Angola for work in diamond-mining districts, where traffickers exploit some in forced labor or sex trafficking in mining camps. Trafficking networks recruit and transport Congolese girls as young as 12 years old from Kasai Occidental in the DRC to Angola for labor and sex trafficking.

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