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2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN: Tier 3

The Government of Afghanistan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; therefore Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 3. Despite the lack of significant efforts, the government took some steps to address trafficking, including continuing to identify trafficking victims, prosecuting and convicting some traffickers, including two perpetrators of *bacha bazi* for kidnapping, and conducting four trainings for provincial anti-trafficking officers. The government increased the number of Child Protection Units (CPUs) at Afghan National Police (ANP) recruitment centers, which prevented the recruitment of 357 child soldiers. The government also took several broad child protection efforts, including authorizing formation of a National Child Protection Committee to address *bacha bazi* and hiring additional social workers. In response to allegations of the sexual abuse and sex trafficking of 165 boys in Logar province, an attorney general’s office (AGO) investigation identified 20 perpetrators; by the end of this reporting period, the investigation had produced nine arrests and two convictions for related offenses. However, during the reporting period, there was a government policy or pattern of sexual slavery in government compounds (*bacha bazi*) and recruitment and use of child soldiers. Despite local officials’ widespread acknowledgement that many police, especially commanders at remote checkpoints, recruited boys for *Bacha bazi*, some high-level and provincial authorities, including at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), categorically denied the existence of *bacha bazi* among police and would not investigate reports. Additionally, despite consistent reports of *bacha bazi* perpetrated by Afghan National Army (ANA), ANP, and Afghan Local Police (ALP) officials, the government has never prosecuted a police officer for *bacha bazi*. MOI, the Ministry of Defense (MOD), and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) denied that Afghan security forces recruited or used child soldiers, despite multiple cases during the reporting period. Some trafficking victims reported authorities forced them to have sex in exchange for pursuing their cases or raped them and sent them to detention centers when they tried to report their traffickers. Authorities continued to arrest, detain, and penalize many trafficking victims, including punishing sex trafficking victims for “moral crimes.” Due to inadequate victim protection, some NGOs would not assist trafficking victims in reporting their traffickers to law enforcement.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Drastically increase criminal investigations and prosecutions of suspected traffickers—especially law enforcement and military officials—and convict and adequately sentence perpetrators. • Cease the unlawful recruitment and use of children by Afghan security forces, including for *bacha bazi*, and demobilize children from all armed groups with adequate protection and reintegration support. • Issue a directive to law enforcement to pursue criminal investigations in cases of human trafficking, including *bacha bazi*, and protect victims during interactions with law enforcement. • Empower the National Child Protection Committee to identify and suggest the removal of public servants implicated in perpetrating or facilitating *bacha bazi*. • Cease penalization and abuse of victims for unlawful acts their traffickers forced them to commit, including “moral crimes.” • Train judicial officials on the anti-trafficking provisions in the new penal code and the prohibition against mediation in sex trafficking cases per the 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women Act. • Cease support to non-state armed groups that recruit and use child soldiers. • Provide clear guidance to security personnel on identification and protection of child trafficking victims and train them on it. • Approve, disseminate, and conduct widespread training on the standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral to services. • Strengthen law enforcement’s capacity to address trafficking, including increased training and resources for the Ministry of Interior’s provincial anti-trafficking/smuggling units. • Dedicate resources for trafficking victim shelters and services, including for male victims. • Amend Chapter 5 of the penal code to increase the penalties for *bacha bazi* in line with penalties prescribed for other forms of trafficking. • Raise awareness of trafficking at the local level, including its definition, law enforcement and social service resources available, and community prevention efforts. • Support the High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Human Trafficking/Smuggling (High Commission) and its data collection efforts.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts against civilian and official perpetrators of trafficking, and officials complicit in recruitment and use of child soldiers and *bacha bazi* continued to operate with impunity. The 2017 Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, including *bacha bazi*. The law prescribed penalties between five and eight years’ imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other serious crimes. Aggravating factors increased the maximum sentence to between 10 and 15 years’ imprisonment and the imposition of the death penalty if exploitation for armed fighting resulted in the victim’s death. Article 510 of the 2018 criminal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, including *bacha bazi*. Article 511 prescribed penalties of five to 10 years’ imprisonment for trafficking offenses involving adult male victims and 10 to 16 years’ imprisonment if the victim was a woman or child, or exploited in *bacha bazi*. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other serious crimes, such as rape. Article 512 outlined aggravating factors and increased penalties to 16 to 20 years’ imprisonment for sex trafficking or forced armed fighting and between 20 to 30 years’ if the victim forced to fight died while subjected to trafficking. While the 2018 penal code also specifically criminalized more crimes related to *bacha bazi*, some of which would constitute trafficking offenses, it also prescribed lower penalties for certain acts constituting *bacha bazi* than those prescribed under Article 510. Most of these penalties were not sufficiently stringent, nor commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The government also used the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) to prosecute and convict sex traffickers.

The government’s lack of resources and lack of political will to hold perpetrators accountable diminished enforcement of anti-trafficking laws. The judiciary remained underfunded, understaffed, undertrained, and in some cases ineffective, and judicial officials were often intimidated by perpetrators or corrupt. In urban areas, if judges or prosecutors did not assess that a clearly defined legal statute applied, or they were unaware of the statutory law, then they enforced customary law, which often resulted in outcomes that discriminated against women. While the EVAW law expressly prohibits mediation, and other Afghan laws neither permit nor prescribe mediation in criminal cases, police and judges often referred trafficking victims to mediation. In some areas, anti-government forces, such as the Taliban, instituted their own justice systems, including for trafficking victims.

As in the previous year, ministries provided conflicting data, which called into question its validity and made it difficult to compare to previous years. Under the 2017 anti-trafficking law, MOI reported investigation and prosecution of 16 suspects in 14 trafficking-related cases. The judiciary convicted seven traffickers. Judges acquitted four suspects and continued prosecution in five cases, although it was unclear if the cases were human trafficking, kidnapping, or migrant smuggling. This was a significant decrease from the investigation of 138 alleged traffickers, prosecution of 64 suspects, and conviction of 34 traffickers under the anti-trafficking and EVAW laws in the previous reporting period. Despite laws explicitly criminalizing *bacha bazi*, the government demonstrated little political will to combat it. Most often, MOI either refused to investigate *bacha bazi* cases or investigated them as other crimes such as kidnapping. In addition to the trafficking cases filed under the 2017 anti-trafficking law, during the reporting period, the judiciary notably convicted five civilian perpetrators of *bacha bazi* in three cases and indicted four others in one ongoing case. However, the government did not use the anti-trafficking law or the *bacha bazi* law in any of the cases.

The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of any allegedly complicit officials for trafficking offenses. Disregard for the rule of law and widespread official complicity in trafficking, especially *bacha bazi*, overwhelmingly impeded efforts to address these crimes. Afghan security forces, in particular the ANP and ALP, recruited boys for *bacha bazi* in every province of the country. While some high-level officials and provincial authorities continued to deny the existence of *bacha bazi*, and MOI denied any police perpetrated *bacha bazi*, local authorities overwhelmingly acknowledged that many police, especially checkpoint commanders, recruited boys for sex trafficking in *bacha bazi*. Particularly in Kandahar province, local police and elder community members openly exploited boys in *bacha bazi* on a large scale without fear of reprisal. The government has never prosecuted a police officer for *bacha bazi*. In rare cases, officials sometimes issued arrest warrants for government perpetrators of *bacha bazi* but did not enforce the warrants. Some Afghan security forces and pro-government militias—some of whom may have received direct financial support from the government—recruited boys specifically for use in *bacha bazi*. In some instances, ANA officials reportedly used promises of food and money to entice boys into *bacha bazi*. International organizations verified three cases of *bacha bazi* perpetrated by the ANP and ALP during the reporting period but cautioned such figures remained an extreme underrepresentation of the problem. Police did not arrest any perpetrators reported during the reporting period, nor did it arrest any of the 10 ANP or ALP officials whom an international organization had referred to police in 2018 for *bacha bazi*. The government did not report updates on its investigations into 13 ANA officers for crimes related to *bacha bazi*, including witnessing and failure to report *bacha bazi*.

Afghan security forces, including the ANA, ANP, ALP, and NDS, continued to recruit and use children in combat and non-combat roles with impunity. An international organization verified at least three cases of recruitment by the ANP, one by the ALP, and one case by both the ALP and a pro-government militia. This is similar to previous years; however, experts stressed recruitment and use

of child soldiers remained underreported, often due to safety concerns. Despite consistent identification of child soldiers among Afghan security forces for several years, MOI, MOD, and NDS denied all allegations. The government has never prosecuted any military or police official for recruitment or use of child soldiers. Pro-government militias that may have received direct financial support from the Afghan government reportedly recruited and used child soldiers, primarily in non-combat roles. The government denied and did not investigate such claims. Some officials accepted bribes to produce identity documents for boys stating they were at least 18 years old.

Widespread official complicity in human trafficking continued outside of the Afghan security forces, also with impunity. Observers noted perpetrators of *bacha bazi* often paid bribes to, or had relationships with, law enforcement, prosecutors, or judges that protected them from prosecution. A public health official who conducted forensic exams for criminal cases reported state prosecutors pressured him not to report confirmed evidence of abuse, including in cases of *bacha bazi*. In 2019, activists spent six months investigating and interviewing hundreds of boys aged 14 to 20 in Logar province across three high schools, and found evidence that at least 165 were sexually abused by teachers, principals, vice-principals, fellow students, and at least one local law enforcement official. Some youth were required to have sex in exchange for passing grades. Officials removed from his job one school manager accused of *bacha bazi* but later gave him a job at Logar’s provincial Education Department. After local authorities refused to take action on the allegations of abuse, activists reported the allegations to international media in November 2019. After an international outcry, several government bodies, including the AGO, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Ministry of Education, Parliament, and the Logar provincial government, investigated the allegations, but the quality and thoroughness of the investigations varied, and the results were inconsistent with victim reports. The AGO investigation identified 20 perpetrators, nine of whom authorities had arrested as of March 2020. In contradiction with victims’ reports, the government did not identify a single government educator or law enforcement officer as a suspect. Although activists said victims had identified many public high school teachers and other educators as perpetrators, the AGO failed to find any link between the Logar child sexual abuse and the Logar public school system. Separately, many female sex trafficking victims alleged prosecutors and judicial officials sought sexual favors in exchange for continuing investigations and prosecutions of their cases. The government did not report an update on its investigation into two police officers accused of facilitating the sex trafficking of an adult woman. Indian authorities arrested an Afghan official for purchasing sex from two potential sex trafficking victims.

Law enforcement and judicial officials continued to have a limited understanding of trafficking. While the 2017 law used separate terms and definitions for trafficking and smuggling, Dari, the most widely spoken language in Afghanistan, historically used the same word for human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and officials conflated the two crimes. MOI organized and conducted four regional training sessions for approximately 590 provincial anti-trafficking unit officers, Afghan Border Police, and police Criminal Investigation Department officers in four provinces. MOI continued to operate dedicated trafficking/smuggling units in each of the 34 provinces and in Kabul, with two officers in each province. NDS, the ABP, and a Kabul-based INTERPOL unit also had mandates to address human trafficking. The agencies did not have a clear delineation of responsibilities, so NDS investigated most human trafficking cases. While ABP was best-positioned to identify and investigate trafficking at the borders, and some of its officers received anti-trafficking training during the reporting period, many officials still lacked anti-trafficking training. In addition, the force as a whole lacked the resources to identify and investigate trafficking. Officials acknowledged personnel, resources, and knowledge of trafficking remained inadequate across all units. Law enforcement lacked cooperation with neighboring countries, which impeded investigation of transnational trafficking cases.

PROTECTION

The government maintained inadequate protection efforts and continued to penalize and abuse trafficking victims. The High Commission reported identifying 493 potential trafficking victims in 2019, compared to 434 in 2018, although in both years NGOs expressed concern about the validity of the figures. The government did not use systematic victim identification procedures, and district and provincial-level officials continued to conflate trafficking and smuggling. An international organization continued to train officials on a victim identification manual and national referral mechanism to connect trafficking victims with care, which it had developed with the High Commission the previous year. However, implementation awaited approval from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for the second consecutive year. Police did not consistently refer trafficking victims to shelters, and the dearth of shelters impeded victim protection.

International donors and NGOs provided nearly all victim care. NGOs operated, and international donors funded, approximately 27 women’s shelters in 20 provinces that provided protection, legal, medical, and social services to female victims of violence, including trafficking. The shelters did not report how many trafficking victims they assisted. NGOs operated two shelters for boy victims of crime that could assist male trafficking victims younger than 18. No government or NGO shelter could accommodate adult male trafficking victims. At times, the government placed child trafficking victims in orphanages, and some orphanages subjected children to trafficking. Authorities sometimes placed male and female victims in prison if they could not accommodate them in

shelters. In theory, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) would provide services for female trafficking victims and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) would provide services for boy trafficking victims; in practice, neither MOWA nor MOLSA offered victims much support. Family guidance centers in 19 provinces provided non-residential legal and social services for women and children, including trafficking victims. The government also hired additional social workers, including those specifically trained to assist child victims of crime, bringing its total number of social workers to 250. The Child Protection Action Network (CPAN), a conglomerate of NGOs, civil society, and government entities overseen by MOLSA, was active in 170 districts—an increase from 151 districts the previous year—and could provide shelter and some services to child victims of crime. CPAN was the only entity that addressed child protection issues, including child trafficking, outside of Kabul.

The government took some steps to enhance child protection mechanisms, which could assist child trafficking victims. The President ordered several ministries to create a National Child Protection Committee to address *bacha bazi* with representatives from AGO, AIHRC, the Ministry of Education, and other bodies. The Ministry of Education developed terms of reference for its new child protection units, focused on prevention and response to sexual violence at schools. These units will operate at the central and provincial Ministry of Education departments, as well as at the school level.

Afghans continued to both voluntarily return and be deported from Iran and Pakistan, and traffickers abroad forced some Afghans into labor prior to their return or deportation. The government did not screen returnees for trafficking or refer them to services. In cases of parental complicity in child trafficking, authorities often returned children to their parents without sufficient efforts to ensure parents would not subject their children to trafficking again.

Government investigators did not always interview suspected victims of trafficking and, in some cases, did not provide adequate support or security for victims to safely speak about what had happened. Victims, especially of *bacha bazi*, feared abuse and penalization by law enforcement, threats of retaliation from traffickers and one’s community, and even for their lives. The stigma associated with trafficking also prevented the vast majority of trafficking victims from bringing cases forward to law enforcement or seeking care. Multiple *bacha bazi* victims reported police sexually abused them when they tried to report their exploitation and then treated them as criminals, sometimes detaining and penalizing them. In two high-profile investigations into sex trafficking by a high-ranking sports official and Afghan school teachers and police in Logar state, victims reported widespread retaliation from alleged perpetrators and, due to a lack of victim protection, fled Afghanistan. Due to a lack of victim protection, family members and the Taliban murdered at least eight child sex trafficking victims, including some as young as 13 years old, for dishonor. Observers reported they did not recommend trafficking victims report their traffickers to law enforcement or participate in trials due to the significant risk of threats and reprisals and complete lack of protection. Afghan law allows prosecutors to seek restitution for trafficking victims, but there were no reports any prosecutors did so. Foreign victims had the same limited access to services as Afghan victims, and Afghan law allows foreign victims to remain in Afghanistan for at least six months. The High Commission did not report if it identified any foreign victims.

The penal code explicitly prohibited penalization of trafficking victims for unlawful acts their traffickers compelled them to commit. Nevertheless, the government’s formal justice system, informal justice system in rural areas, and the justice system administered by the Taliban all routinely arrested, imprisoned, and penalized adult and child trafficking victims. Some female trafficking victims could not access the formal justice system because cultural norms precluded their engagement with male law enforcement and judicial officials. When female sex trafficking victims did access formal justice, officials penalized some of them for “moral crimes” such as sex outside of marriage. In rural areas, the lack of access to formal justice systems also disproportionately affected females. Male community leaders in some cases settled both criminal and civil disputes and penalized female sex trafficking victims for “moral crimes.” Through its justice system, the Taliban detained and forced into labor some child and adult sex trafficking victims charged with “moral crimes.” Authorities equally penalized male sex trafficking victims. Authorities prosecuted *bacha bazi* victims as equally responsible “criminals” as their adult traffickers. Authorities remanded boy sex trafficking victims to Juvenile Rehabilitation Centers (JRCs) on criminal charges and detained them for several years. Multiple organizations reported JRCs lacked adequate food and education and reported allegations of sexual violence, including against child sex trafficking victims and child soldiers. JRC authorities reportedly presumed detained children to be guilty and did not provide them with knowledge of the charges against them or access to lawyers. Officials sometimes prosecuted victims for possessing forged identity documents. The government did not demobilize child soldiers associated with governmental or non-state armed groups or refer such children to reintegration support. It arrested, detained, and prosecuted for terrorism-related crimes children younger than 12 years old that non-state armed groups had forcibly recruited.

PREVENTION

The government made inadequate efforts to prevent trafficking. The High Commission, the government’s autonomous inter-ministerial anti-trafficking committee under the Ministry of Justice, did not demonstrate a strong willingness to address trafficking. Scheduled to meet quarterly, it only

met once in 2019, the same as in 2018, and key ministries failed to attend. The High Commission’s working-level committee lacked resources and influence over member ministries and relied heavily on NGOs to coordinate and fund meetings. The High Commission had some provincial commissions to implement national anti-trafficking policy at the local level, although the majority did not meet. The government had an anti-trafficking national action plan that covered 2018-2021. The MOJ continued to refuse to share data with an international organization to publish an annual national report on human trafficking. The High Commission, in partnership with international organizations and NGOs, continued public awareness programs. NDS inappropriately detained and mistreated two human rights defenders who reported on official complicity in *bacha bazi*, and the defenders fled the country. In March 2020, MOD, MOI, and NDS began the process of drafting a common child-protection policy for their forces in the field. The government had some existing migrant labor agreements with Gulf countries but did not implement them during the reporting period.

The government established seven additional CPUs during the reporting period, compared to establishing five the previous reporting period. As a result, MOI operated CPUs in all 34 provinces to prevent the recruitment of children into the ANP, an increase from 27 CPUs in the previous reporting period. According to an international organization, the CPUs prevented the recruitment of 357 children during this reporting period. However, some NGOs reported CPUs were not sufficiently equipped, staffed, or trained to provide adequate oversight and noted they did not oversee ALP recruitment centers, which also recruited children. The government did not have a sufficient referral pathway for children identified by CPUs and prevented them from joining the security forces to provide shelter, services, and family reintegration; thus, the children remained highly vulnerable to recruitment and use, as well as other forms of forced labor. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or provide anti-trafficking training for diplomatic personnel.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Afghanistan, and traffickers exploit victims from Afghanistan abroad. Internal trafficking is more prevalent than transnational trafficking. Traffickers exploit men, women, and children in bonded labor, a form of forced labor by which traffickers offer loans and manipulate the debts to coerce workers into continued employment. Traffickers compel entire families to work in bonded labor in the brick-making industry, predominately in eastern Afghanistan and in carpet weaving countrywide. Most Afghan trafficking victims are children forced to work in carpet making, brick kilns, domestic servitude, commercial sex, begging, poppy cultivation and harvesting, salt mining, transnational drug smuggling, and truck driving. Some Afghan families force their children into labor with physical violence or knowingly sell their children into sex trafficking, including *bacha bazi*. Opium-farming families sometimes sell their children to settle debts with opium traffickers, and some drug-addicted parents subject their children to sex trafficking or force them into labor, including begging. Some orphanages run by NGOs and overseen by the government subjected children to trafficking. During the reporting period, multiple former government officials alleged high-level officials forced women to have sex in exchange for jobs and promotions. Victims alleged some law enforcement and judiciary officials requested sexual favors in exchange for pursuing cases. In 2019, 165 boys in Logar province reported widespread sexual abuse by government teachers, principals, and local law enforcement, including requiring children to have sex in exchange for passing grades and subjecting boys to sex trafficking in *bacha bazi*. Some boys who reported sexual abuse and sex trafficking to police reported police officers then raped them.

Afghan security forces and non-state armed groups continue to unlawfully recruit and use children in combat and non-combat roles. Insurgent groups, including the Taliban and the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, use children in direct hostilities, to plant and detonate improvised explosive devices (IEDs), carry weapons, spy, and guard bases. The Taliban recruits child soldiers from its *madrasahs* in Afghanistan and Pakistan that provide military training and religious indoctrination, and it sometimes provides families cash payments or protection in exchange for sending their children to these schools. Armed groups target children from impoverished and rural areas, particularly those under Taliban control. The Taliban abducted and forced adult women into labor. The Taliban maintained illegal detention facilities in which it forced detainees, including child and adult sex trafficking victims charged with “moral crimes,” into labor. ANP and ALP use children in combat and non-combat roles, including to carry weapons and as personal servants, support staff, bodyguards, and sex slaves in *bacha bazi*. ANA, NDS, and ABP recruit and use children in combat and, to a lesser extent, non-combat roles. Taliban insurgents killed, wounded, and captured ANA soldiers as young as 13. Pro-government militias that may receive direct financial support from the government recruited and used child soldiers, primarily in support roles and for *bacha bazi*.

Traffickers’, including government and military officials’, exploitation of children as young as nine in *bacha bazi* remained pervasive nationwide. In the northern provinces, many *bacha bazi* traffickers were community elders or private citizens. In southern provinces, by contrast, *bacha bazi* perpetrators were more commonly police, military, and local government officials. Local authorities overwhelmingly acknowledged many police, especially checkpoint commanders, recruited boys for sex trafficking in *bacha bazi* nationwide but especially in Kandahar province. *Bacha bazi* survivors reported to NGOs an “overwhelming understanding that *bacha bazi* is committed by the powerful,”

including military commanders and community leaders. International organizations reported cases of *bacha bazi* by nearly all groups. ALP, ANA, and pro-government militias reportedly recruited some children specifically for *bacha bazi*. Perpetrators of *bacha bazi* sometimes offer bribes or use relationships with law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges to evade punishment.

In 2019, Afghanistan received approximately 504,977 returns of undocumented Afghan migrant workers from Iran and Pakistan, including unaccompanied children. Traffickers specifically targeted returnees for forced labor in agriculture, brick kilns, and carpet weaving. In 2019, Turkey deported nearly 24,000 Afghans; while most were migrant smuggling victims, traffickers had previously forced some to work in Iran or to fight in militias in Syria. Traffickers targeted Afghans residing in Pakistan—including 1.4 million Afghan Proof of Registration card holders, 878,000 Afghan Citizen Card holders, and an unknown number of undocumented Afghans. International organizations documented cases of IDPs selling their children to local shopkeepers in servitude to repay debts. Some traffickers targeted indebted IDPs for forced labor and sex trafficking.

Afghan men, women, and children pay intermediaries to assist them in finding employment abroad, primarily in Iran, Pakistan, and Europe; some intermediaries and employers force Afghans into labor or sex trafficking. Some Afghan women and girls who are sold to husbands in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and India are exploited in sex trafficking and domestic servitude by their new husbands. Some Afghan parents forcibly send boys to Iran to work to pay for their dowry in an arranged marriage. Afghan boys and men are subjected to forced labor and debt bondage in agriculture and construction, primarily in Iran, Pakistan, Greece, Turkey, and the Gulf states. Traffickers in Iran, including Iranian criminal groups, exploit Afghan children in forced labor as beggars and street vendors and forced criminality, including drug trafficking and smuggling of fuel and tobacco. Iranian police sometimes detain, torture, and extort Afghan child trafficking victims before deportation. The Iranian government and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps continue to force and coerce Afghan migrants, including children as young as 12 years old, to fight in Iranian-led and -funded Shia militias deployed to Syria by threatening them with arrest and deportation to Afghanistan. Trafficking networks smuggle Afghan nationals living in Iran to Europe and subject them to sex trafficking and force them to work in restaurants to pay off debts incurred by smuggling fees. Some Afghan traffickers subjected Afghan boys to *bacha bazi* in Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, and Serbia. Traffickers have subjected women and girls from China, Iran, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan to sex trafficking in Afghanistan. Under the pretense of high-paying employment opportunities, some labor recruiting agencies lure foreign workers to Afghanistan from South and Central Asia and subject them to forced labor after arrival.

ecoi.net summary:



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