

PROTECTION

The government maintained efforts to identify and assist trafficking victims. It reported identifying five potential victims of trafficking, compared to four in 2016 and zero in 2015. Front-line responders utilized standard operating procedures on victim identification and referral. While the government did not operate any specialized shelters for trafficking victims, it had capacity to host female trafficking victims in shelters for women victims of domestic violence, which restricted victims' movements if their safety was at risk. Through an NGO, the Organization for Victim Assistance funded shelter for male victims in hotels or safe houses for troubled male youth. The government-funded NGOs on a case-by-case basis to provide victims with wide-ranging and comprehensive care and assistance, which included legal assistance, shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and counseling among other services. Government officials reported that absence of dedicated funding for anti-trafficking efforts hindered their ability to provide adequate support to trafficking victims. In 2017, four victims chose not to cooperate with the prosecution and asked to be returned to their country. The government facilitated their return; however, it was unclear if any other assistance was provided. The fifth victim assisted with the investigation and provided written testimony against her traffickers; she received temporary shelter and financial assistance to return to her country of origin. In the victim's absence, the victim's assistance bureau sought restitution from her traffickers on her behalf. Citing insufficient proof of damages, a judge denied the state's request.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent trafficking. The government approved the 2017-2021 national action plan but did not establish a dedicated budget for its implementation. During the reporting period, the public prosecutor's office conducted research focused on the phenomenon of Venezuelan *trago meisjes* or drink girls. As a result of this research, the government-funded a robust internet awareness campaign seeking to dissuade Venezuelan women from traveling to Curaçao to work in bars and dance venues where they could become vulnerable to sex trafficking. The government operated a victim assistance hotline, although no trafficking tips were received during the reporting period.

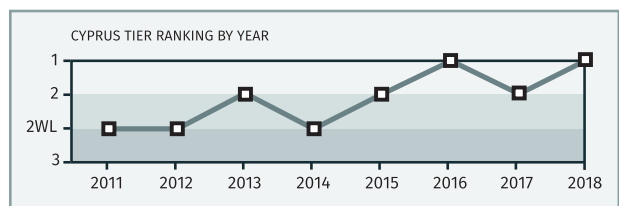
The government continued to keep an official register of individuals in prostitution working legally in Campo Alegre. The Ministries of Justice and Social Development, Labor, and Welfare continued review of all work and residence permits. The Ministry of Labor allowed foreign migrant laborers to request residence permits independent of their employers to give employees better knowledge regarding the terms of work within contracts. The government did not report efforts to reduce demand for forced labor or commercial sex.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Curaçao is a transit and destination country for women, children, and men subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Vulnerable populations include foreign and Curaçaoan women and girls in unregulated prostitution, as well as migrant workers from other Caribbean countries, South America, India, and China in the construction, landscaping, minimarket, retail, and restaurant industries. Due to the deteriorating situation in Venezuela, legal and illegal migration to Curaçao increased, leaving many vulnerable to trafficking, including women working illegally at bars and brothels.

CYPRUS: TIER 1

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government made key achievements to do so during the reporting period; therefore Cyprus was upgraded to Tier 1. These achievements included convicting more traffickers and increasing victim protection efforts by improving the quality of service, increasing resources to NGOs, and holding monthly trainings for government-run shelter staff. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it did not reduce the length of trials and victims faced bureaucratic delays in accessing health care. Labor inspectors lacked resources and observers reported a need for an independent evaluation of anti-trafficking policies and programs. The Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) continued to operate with limited participation from civil society.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CYPRUS

Vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers under Law 60(I) and impose strong sentences; proactively identify victims among vulnerable populations, including migrants, asylum-seekers and agricultural workers; improve cooperation of all relevant actors, including NGOs, in the MCG; reduce delays in court proceedings; strengthen the capacity of the labor inspectorate to identify and refer victims of forced labor; reduce delays in accessing health care; increase access to support for victims identified outside of business hours of support service providers; improve victim-centered investigations and prosecutions and implement witness protection measures when necessary; and develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for anti-trafficking policies and efforts.

PROSECUTION

The government increased law enforcement efforts. Law 60(I) of 2014 criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment, which were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes. The police investigated 38 suspected traffickers (26 in 2016); 29 suspects for sex trafficking, five for labor trafficking, and four for both sex and labor trafficking (13 suspects for sex trafficking and 13 for labor trafficking in 2016). The government also investigated four suspects for forced marriage (113 in 2016), which authorities considered to be trafficking under their law. The government prosecuted three defendants (10 in 2016); two defendants for both sex and labor trafficking and one for sex trafficking. Courts convicted eight traffickers (one in 2016); one for sex and labor trafficking and seven for forced labor (one for sex trafficking in 2016). Six labor traffickers received sentences between 12 months and 18 months imprisonment, one trafficker received five years imprisonment for sex and labor trafficking, and one labor trafficker received a fine of €5,000 (\$6,000).

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order maintained an anti-trafficking unit (ATU) that conducted proactive investigations. Observers reported key witnesses left the country before trial due to long delays, hindering prosecution efforts. The Police Academy continued to train police officers on trafficking issues, including new recruits, immigration police, and community police. The government separately organized 18 training programs for police officers. The government extradited one trafficker to Moldova and another to Israel, received two traffickers extradited from Greece, and assisted five mutual legal assistance requests. Additionally, law enforcement conducted joint investigations with Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, and Poland. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses.

PROTECTION

The government increased victim protection efforts. The government identified 27 victims (21 in 2016); 18 victims of sex trafficking, eight victims of forced labor, and one victim of both sex trafficking and forced labor (10 of sex trafficking, three of forced labor, and eight of forced criminality in 2016); 21 were females and six males (17 females and four males in 2016); and one victim was a boy (no children in 2016). A multi-disciplinary national referral mechanism (NRM) provided standard operating procedures for identifying and referring victims to services, including an operational manual and written guidance for first responders. The NRM required first responders to conduct preliminary identification of potential victims and refer potential victims to the Social Welfare Services (SWS). SWS officers provided potential victims with information and notified the ATU, who officially identified victims. The ATU interviewed 80 potential victims (169 in 2016); the government identified 64 potential victims, NGOs identified ten, two self-identified, and five were identified by the public (NGOs identified 52 potential victims and the government identified 117 potential victims in 2016). Observers reported the ATU lacked transparency in the identification process, but authorities reported using internal identification manuals based on international standards and guidelines. Specialized personnel in the police anti-trafficking unit, including a forensic psychologist, conducted interviews with potential and identified victims before taking an official statement. Observers reported potential forced labor victims remained undetected partly due to a lack of resources for labor inspectors. Observers also reported a lack of proactive identification efforts at the Kofinou Reception Center and reported anecdotal accounts of exploitation. Authorities reported fully screening all individuals awaiting deportation for trafficking indicators. The government organized three training sessions attended by approximately 220 government officials on victim identification and referral. The government also trained first responders in a region with a high concentration of migrant laborers in agriculture and separately trained marriage officers and social welfare officers on proactive identification.

The government spent €265,770 (\$319,060) to operate the SWS-run shelter, compared to €294,940 (\$354,070) in 2016. This amount did not include salaries for the SWS-run shelter staff. The government also allocated €263,550 (\$316,380), compared to €254,560 (\$305,600) in 2016, in financial assistance to trafficking victims through a public benefit scheme known as Guaranteed Minimum Income. SWS evaluated the needs of victims and potential victims and referred them to the appropriate government agencies and NGOs for assistance. SWS operated a specialized shelter for sex trafficking victims and victims of forced marriage with the capacity to accommodate

15 victims; the SWS-run shelter accommodated 30 official and potential victims in 2017 (53 in 2016). Victims may stay for one month or longer, as appropriate, in the shelter for a reflection period. The SWS-run shelter allowed adult victims to leave the shelter voluntarily after an assessment conducted by ATU. Observers reported a lack of immediate support and accommodation for potential victims identified outside of SWS business hours and did not want to cooperate with law enforcement. Observers also reported that slow processing of SWS evaluations sometimes created obstacles for victims to access services. The government signed a memorandum of cooperation with an NGO and allocated €60,000 (\$72,030) to the NGO to open the first open house for female sex trafficking victims, designed primarily as a halfway accommodation for recognized sex trafficking victims while searching for permanent residence after leaving the state-run shelter. Additionally, the government allocated €30,000 (\$36,000), compared to €15,000 (\$18,000) in 2016, to an NGO-run shelter to accommodate female victims of labor trafficking and female victims not eligible for accommodation at the SWS-run shelter, as well as for longer-term accommodation of female victims of sex trafficking after they leave the shelter. The government also provided a rent subsidy and a monthly allowance for all victims and partnered with NGOs to provide apartments for male victims. The law entitled victims to psycho-social services, health care, translation and interpretation services, education, vocational training, and financial assistance. Observers continued to report improved service quality for victims but reported victims faced obstacles in accessing health care due to bureaucratic delays. In the previous reporting period, observers reported staff at the SWS-run shelter were not adequately trained to provide the necessary psychological support to victims; however, the government organized monthly trainings between SWS-run shelter staff and clinical psychologists from the Ministry of Health in 2017. Employment counselors trained to handle sensitive cases sought suitable employment for each victim but finding employment for victims remained a challenge. The law entitled child victims to education, placement into foster homes, and specialized medical and psycho-social care; the government provided support to two one victim (two in 2017). In the previous reporting period, the government streamlined the process for providing financial support to victims and prioritized public benefit applications from trafficking victims. NGOs confirmed all identified victims received a monthly allowance and reported no delays in receiving allowances. Victims received emergency financial assistance in cases of delayed distribution of monthly allowances.

The government voluntarily repatriated or granted residence permits and work authorization to foreign victims including those who decided after their reflection period not to cooperate with the police. The government extended the residence and work permit for three victims (four in 2016) and granted asylum to four victims (three in 2016). The government permitted victims to leave Cyprus and return for trial, and police remained in contact with victims while they were abroad; two victims left Cyprus but returned to testify in trial (one in 2016). The law entitled victims to witness protection through a request made by the police to the Attorney General; no requests were made in 2016 or 2017. Police officers escorted victims to court proceedings, but experts reported police sometimes did not share information and updates on court procedures or did not keep appointments at promised times creating anxiety among victims. The law entitled victims to closed-door trials, a partition to separate victims from their traffickers, remote testimony, and the use of video recorded testimonies for child victims; however, none of the methods were used in 2016 or 2017.

Twenty-six victims assisted law enforcement in investigations (14 in 2016). Victims can receive restitution through civil suits; the government covered travel and accommodation expenses for a victim to testify in the first civil case against a trafficker but civil courts acquitted the trafficker.

PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts. The MCG to combat trafficking, comprising relevant government agencies and an NGO, met once (twice in 2016) and coordinated and monitored the implementation of the 2016-2018 national action plan; however, observers reported a need for an independent evaluation of anti-trafficking policies and programs. In the previous reporting period, three of the four NGOs in the MCG withdrew because NGOs were not given a substantive role, meetings were infrequent, and two NGOs did not meet financial requirements. The MCG drafted amendments to strengthen civil society participation in the MCG. The MCG formed a working group on improving victim protection. The government continued to print and distribute brochures in 11 languages aimed at potential victims on their rights and assistance available to them. Police and immigration officials interviewed arriving domestic and agricultural workers and ensured they possessed a contract and informed workers of their rights. The Ministry of Labor (MOL) inspected 122 employment agencies (117 in 2016) and revoked the licenses of 10 employment agencies' for labor violations (nine in 2016). MOL also imposed fines on three employment agencies for fraudulent recruitment and police separately investigated three cases involving employment agencies. Courts convicted four perpetrators in one case for illegally operating an employment agency and document forgery; one perpetrator received two years imprisonment, one received 12 months imprisonment, one received 15 months imprisonment, and one received five months imprisonment. The government approved funding for an NGO to conduct awareness campaigns targeting demand for commercial sex acts.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Cyprus is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Victims identified in Cyprus were from India, Latvia, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, China, Bulgaria, Romania, Philippines, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Slovakia, Togo, Moldova, Paraguay, and Czech Republic. Women, primarily from Eastern Europe, Vietnam, India, and Sub-Saharan Africa, are subjected to sex trafficking. Sex trafficking occurs in private apartments and hotels, on the street, and within commercial sex outlets in Cyprus including bars, pubs, coffee shops, and cabarets. Some female sex trafficking victims are recruited with false promises of marriage or work as barmaids or hostesses. Foreign migrant workers—primarily from South and Southeast Asia—are subjected to forced labor in agriculture. Migrant workers subjected to labor trafficking are recruited by employment agencies and enter the country on short-term work permits; after the permits expire, they are often subjected to debt bondage, threats, and withholding of pay and documents. Asylum-seekers from Southeast Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe are subjected to forced labor in agriculture and domestic work. Unaccompanied children, children of migrants, Roma, and asylum-seekers are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor. Romani children are vulnerable to forced begging.

AREA ADMINISTERED BY TURKISH CYPRIOTS

The northern area of Cyprus is administered by Turkish Cypriots. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriots proclaimed the area the independent "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC"). The United States does not recognize the "TRNC," nor does any other country except Turkey. The area administered by Turkish Cypriots continues to be a zone of impunity for human trafficking. Turkish Cypriot authorities do not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and are not making significant efforts to do so. If the "TRNC" were assigned a formal ranking in this report, it would be Tier 3. Turkish Cypriots did not keep statistics on law enforcement efforts against trafficking offenders. The area administered by Turkish Cypriots lacked shelters for victims and social, economic, and psychological services for victims. Local observers reported authorities were complicit in facilitating trafficking, and police continued to retain passports upon arrival of women working in nightclubs. The "Nightclubs and Similar Places of Entertainment Law of 2000" provided the most relevant legal framework vis-à-vis trafficking and stipulated nightclubs may only provide entertainment such as dance performances. Additionally, trafficking-related cases would be tried under the "TRNC criminal code," which prohibited living off the earnings of prostitution or encouraging prostitution and forced labor. However, Turkish Cypriots rarely enforced this law and rarely prosecuted nightclub owners, bodyguards, or clients. In October 2017, the owner of a "nightclub" was arrested and on trial for "encouraging prostitution" and "living off the earnings of prostitution." Additionally, in February 2018, the Mayor of Nicosia Turkish Municipality closed four "nightclubs" citing absence of established "legal" frameworks and reports of sexual exploitation. The authorities made no efforts to punish labor recruiters or brokers involved in the recruitment of workers through knowingly fraudulent employment offers or excessive fees for migration or job placement. There was no "law" that punished traffickers who confiscate workers' passports or documents, change contracts, or withhold wages to subject workers to servitude.

Turkish Cypriot authorities did not allocate funding to anti-trafficking efforts, police were not trained to identify victims, and authorities provided no protection to victims. Police confiscated passports of foreign women working in nightclubs and issued them identity cards, reportedly to protect them from abuse by nightclub owners who confiscated passports. Observers reported women preferred to keep their passports but police convinced them to render passports to avoid deportation. Foreign victims who voiced discontent about the treatment they received were routinely deported. Trafficking victims serving as material witnesses against a former employer were not entitled to find new employment and resided in temporary accommodation arranged by the police, but experts reported women were accommodated at nightclubs. The Turkish Cypriot authorities did not encourage victims to assist in prosecutions against traffickers, and all foreign victims were deported. If the police requested a victim to stay to serve as a witness, the police were required to provide temporary accommodation; however, the only shelter for trafficking victims closed in July 2016.

During the reporting period, "TRNC" authorities issued 1,084 six-month "hostess" and "barmaid" work permits for individuals working in nightclubs and two pubs operating in the north (1,314 in 2016). As of January 2018, there were 400 women working under such permits (342 as of January 2017). Nightclub owners hired female college students during the reporting period to bypass the cap on the number of employees legally permitted in each club and avoid taxes and monitoring. Observers reported

authorities did not consistently document the arrival of women intending to work in nightclubs. Most permit holders came from Moldova, Morocco, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, while others came from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uzbekistan. Reportedly some “parliament” members were clientele of the nightclubs. Women were not permitted to change location once under contract with a nightclub, and Turkish Cypriot authorities deported 331 women (445 in 2016) who curtailed their contracts without screening for trafficking. While prostitution is illegal, female nightclub employees were required to submit to weekly health checks for sexually transmitted infections, suggesting recognition and tacit approval of the prostitution industry. Victims reported bodyguards at the nightclubs accompanied them to health and police checks, ensuring they did not share details of their exploitation with law enforcement or doctors. The “law” that governed nightclubs prohibited foreign women from living at their place of employment; however, most women lived in dormitories adjacent to the nightclubs or in other accommodations arranged by the owner. The “Nightclub Commission,” composed of “police” and “government officials” who regulate nightclubs, prepared brochures on employee rights and distributed them to foreign women upon entry. The “Nightclub Commission” met monthly and made recommendations to the “Ministry of Interior” regarding operating licenses, changes to employee quotas, and the need for intervention at a particular establishment. The “Social Services Department” in the “Ministry of Labor” continued to run a hotline for trafficking victims; however, it was inadequately staffed by one operator who had not received any training on trafficking. An expert reported trafficking victims were afraid to call the hotline because they believed it was linked to authorities. Forty-seven female “nightclub” workers were repatriated after having sought help from the authorities due to complaints regarding their working conditions (30 in 2016). During the reporting period, the “TRNC” issued 945 work permits to domestic workers (2,383 in 2016). Turkish Cypriots made no efforts to reduce demand for commercial sex acts or forced labor.

The “TRNC” is a destination for women from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa who are subjected to forced prostitution in nightclubs licensed and regulated by the Turkish Cypriot administration. Nightclubs provide a significant source of tax revenue for the Turkish Cypriot administration; media reports estimated nightclub owners pay between 20 and 30 million Turkish lira (\$5.3 million and \$7.9 million) in taxes annually. This presents a conflict of interest and a deterrent to increased political will to combat trafficking. Men and women are subjected to forced labor in industrial, construction, agriculture, domestic work, restaurant, and retail sectors. Victims of labor trafficking are controlled through debt bondage, threats of deportation, restriction of movement, and inhumane living and working conditions. Labor trafficking victims originate from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, China, Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam. Migrants, especially those who cross into the Turkish Cypriot community after their work permits in the Republic of Cyprus have expired, are vulnerable to labor trafficking. Roma children and Turkish seasonal workers and their families are also vulnerable to labor exploitation. Women issued permits for domestic work are vulnerable to forced labor. Men and women enrolled as university students, particularly from Sub-Saharan African countries, are vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor. As in previous years, observers reported a number of women entered the “TRNC” on three-month tourist or student visas and engaged in prostitution in apartments in north Nicosia, Kyrenia, and Famagusta; some may be trafficking victims. Migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees,

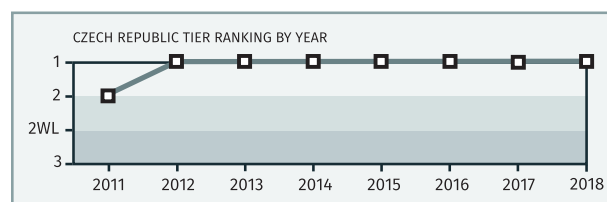
and their children are also at risk for sexual exploitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TURKISH CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES:

Enact “legislation” prohibiting all forms of human trafficking; screen for human trafficking victims, including in nightclubs and pubs; increase transparency in the regulation of nightclubs and promote awareness among clients and the public about force, fraud, and coercion used to compel prostitution; provide funding to NGO shelters and care services for the protection of victims; investigate, prosecute, and convict “officials” complicit in trafficking; provide alternatives to deportation for victims of trafficking; and acknowledge and take steps to address conditions of forced labor, including among domestic workers.

CZECH REPUBLIC: TIER 1

The Government of the Czech Republic fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period; therefore Czech Republic remained on Tier 1. The government demonstrated serious and sustained efforts by increasing convictions, providing comprehensive care for victims, and successfully encouraging victim cooperation with law enforcement. Although the government meets the minimum standards, judges and prosecutors continued to enforce trafficking legislation unevenly and sometimes prosecuted trafficking crimes under the pimping statute when they involved initial victim consent. In some cases, the courts suspended the sentences of convicted traffickers, weakening the deterrent effect of the penalties. The government identified fewer trafficking victims, and labor inspectors remained underutilized in victim identification efforts.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CZECH REPUBLIC

Vigorously investigate both sex and labor trafficking, particularly at the regional level; prosecute suspected offenders of both sex and labor trafficking, using the anti-trafficking statute, and imprison convicted traffickers; increase training for prosecutors and judges on the severity of the crime and on applying the anti-trafficking statute to protect victims and ensure convictions result in proportionate and dissuasive sentences; train prosecutors and judges on the irrelevance of a victim’s initial consent when proving a trafficking crime; improve law enforcement data collection efforts, including by disaggregating sex and labor trafficking case data and report victim data more accurately; expand authority of labor inspectors to go beyond inspection of labor documents when investigating trafficking; increase specialized case management services for children and streamline procedures for identification of child victims; enhance collaboration between the labor inspectorate and police on investigating potential labor trafficking cases; improve victims’ ability to access court-ordered restitution; and train first responders, including labor inspectors, police, and