

human trafficking and related crimes limited victim identification efforts. Authorities confused human trafficking with other crimes, such as child pornography, general labor exploitation, sexual abuse, and migrant smuggling, hindering their ability to identify trafficking victims. Authorities from the Ministry of Health did not receive training on victim identification and did not screen for trafficking indicators despite periodically administering medical tests to individuals in commercial sex, a population vulnerable to sex trafficking.

There were five specialized shelters that could assist female victims of trafficking, including three located and funded by department authorities in Cochabamba, Potosi, and Santa Cruz and two NGO-operated shelters in La Paz. There was a sixth inactive shelter in La Paz that could assist underage female victims of trafficking; however, for unknown reasons it remained non-functional. Law enforcement officials were often unable to secure safe accommodations for trafficking victims, particularly in departments without multi-use facilities. Law enforcement officers could give victims money for hotel rooms for the night in the hope victims could seek greater support from local government authorities or get back in touch with family members. The government did not report providing specialized services to adult male victims but could provide basic assistance for them at migrant shelters. Authorities could refer underage male trafficking victims to NGOs, private shelters, and religious organizations for assistance, but it did not report doing so during the reporting period.

The government had several mechanisms to encourage victims to cooperate in cases against traffickers, but officials did not report using these during the reporting period. Foreign victims who assisted in the case against their traffickers could receive a humanitarian visa, but the process often took years, and victims could not work during that time. While authorities did not report how many victims of trafficking received humanitarian visas, if any, NGOs reported authorities treated foreign victims of trafficking fairly, following legal standards, and those identified had access to the same services as Bolivian victims. According to civil society actors, government officials worked with their foreign counterparts to facilitate repatriation in a timely fashion when victims sought that remedy. The government had a protocol for the repatriation of victims identified abroad but did not report if it repatriated or provided support to the 20 Bolivian victims identified in the Peruvian mining town of La Rinconada. The government had Gesell chambers in every department, and in lieu of testifying in person, victims could provide recorded testimony or submit a written statement to the court. Under Bolivian law, victims and prosecutors could request restitution for damages from the sentencing judge. When victims did not participate in the case against the traffickers, they or prosecutors could still file restitution claims within three months of sentencing. The government did not report whether any victim or prosecutor sought restitution in trafficking cases. Authorities did not report penalizing victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit.

PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts. The Plurinational Council against Human Trafficking and Smuggling, chaired by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), was responsible for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts at the national level. Two sub-ministerial units were responsible for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts at the technical level. The council convened in March, June, and December. In the past, observers noted a lack of interagency coordination, in part due to overlapping mandates. The 2016-2020 NAP expired, and authorities held some meetings for the development of a new five-year plan to combat trafficking but did not finalize or approve a new NAP by the end of the reporting period. The government had a federal registry and required all employment agencies to register and provide the Ministry of Labor (MOL) with all recruitment and job placement records; however, authorities did not report reviewing or investigating any applications that raised trafficking concerns. The MOL did not report conducting any labor inspections or training inspectors to identify human trafficking crimes in 2021. The government did not report training officials on the identification of forced labor indicators during the reporting period. Authorities in the La Paz metropolitan area maintained a hotline for citizens and victims to report trafficking crimes. However, authorities did not report identifying any victims or starting any investigations as a result of calls to this hotline.

The autonomous department of Cochabamba launched a new hotline the public could use to report trafficking crimes.

Authorities partnered with international organizations and NGOs to promote trafficking awareness and train government officials and members of the public to prevent the crime. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. The Institute for Normalization of Quality, a semi-autonomous government agency, operated a “triple seal” certification program for sugar producers whose final products were certified to be free of child labor, discrimination, and forced labor. In January 2022, authorities issued the triple seal to the largest sugar producer in the country responsible for 40 percent of the market. This was the second sugar producer to receive the triple seal since the certification was created. Media reporting indicated 80 percent of the exported and 60 percent of the internal sugar market were free from child labor, discrimination, and forced labor.

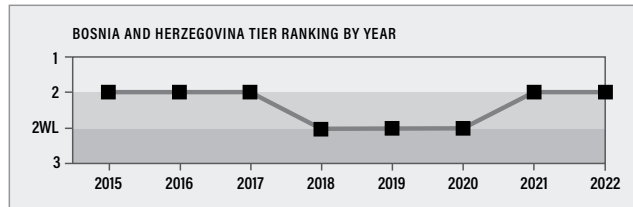
TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Bolivia, and traffickers exploit victims from Bolivia abroad. Traffickers exploit Bolivian adults and children in sex trafficking and forced labor within the country and abroad. To a more limited extent, traffickers exploited women from neighboring countries, including Brazil, Colombia, and Paraguay, in sex trafficking in Bolivia. Traffickers exploit an increasing number of Venezuelan victims in sex trafficking and forced labor within the country. In 2021, authorities reported a notable surge in the number of Venezuelan and Haitian victims of sex trafficking and forced labor in the country. Traffickers subject some migrants from The Gambia, Venezuela, Chile, and the Caribbean traveling to or through Bolivia to sex trafficking and forced labor. Traffickers exploited children in sex tourism in rural Indigenous communities in the north of the La Paz department, in and around the city of Rurrenabaque, and in tourist areas in the departments of La Paz and Beni, openly advertising to tourists speaking Hebrew and Arabic. Rural and poor Bolivians, most of whom are Indigenous, and LGBTQI+ youth are particularly at risk for sex and labor trafficking. Bolivian women and girls are exploited in sex trafficking within Bolivia and neighboring countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, and Peru. Within the country, traffickers exploit Bolivian adults and children in forced labor in domestic work, mining, ranching, and agriculture. Forced criminality continues to be a problem; media outlets reported cases of children forced to commit crimes, such as robbery and drug production, and others exploited in forced begging. In 2019, traffickers forced a Bolivian victim into criminality by compelling her to smuggle drugs into Malaysia. Traffickers exploit Bolivians in forced labor in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile in sweatshops, agriculture, brick-making, domestic work, textile factories, and the informal sector. Traffickers continue to use social media as the primary recruitment tool, luring vulnerable individuals with fraudulent employment opportunities and then exploiting them in forced labor or sex trafficking. Civil society organizations noted a pattern of exploitation in which older trafficking victims became recruiters of younger victims.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: TIER 2

The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina 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, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Bosnia and Herzegovina remained on Tier 2. These efforts included increasing overall prosecution efforts with the state, Republika Srpska (RS), and Brcko District (BD) convicting more traffickers and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation) investigating and prosecuting more suspects. Judges issued more sentences with significant prison terms, and the State Prosecutor's Office (SPO) created a specialized department and staffed the department with three prosecutors. The government updated standard operating procedures (SOPs) for victim identification and identified victims

from irregular migration flows for the first time. The Federation, RS, BD, and all 10 cantons adopted their action plans, and two cantons approved and disbursed honorariums for each member of the local coordinating teams (LCT). However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government identified fewer victims, and law enforcement continued to lack capacity, resources, and technical knowledge, which hindered their ability to conduct effective and victim-centered investigations and prosecutions. Authorities did not investigate cases of potential forced child begging and forced labor involving Roma but rather justified them as traditional cultural practices and customs and returned children to their families, even when parents were involved in their exploitation. The government lacked proactive identification efforts, resulting in victims penalized for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, particularly with misdemeanor charges for petty crimes.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers and impose adequate penalties, which should involve significant prison terms. • Allocate sufficient funding for NGO-run shelters and NGOs providing legal assistance. • Train first responders on victim identification and referral and increase proactive identification efforts, particularly for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and Roma. • Implement the law that exempts victims from penalties for unlawful acts their traffickers compel them to commit, particularly victims of sex trafficking, forced begging, and forced criminality. • Establish and implement policies to formally disconnect identification procedures and official victim status from cooperation on investigations and prosecutions. • Increase resources, personnel, and training for law enforcement to investigate complex trafficking cases. • Institutionalize and implement screening procedures for irregular migrant flows. • Train judges to understand the severity of trafficking when issuing sentences and sensitize prosecutors and judges to the issues of secondary trauma and victim-centered approaches. • Establish procedures to ensure trafficking cases are handled by trained prosecutors. • Standardize victim assistance throughout the country, including the ability to access assistance and support outside of shelters and specialized assistance for male victims. • Integrate Romani advocates into decision-making processes regarding victim protection. • 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.

PROSECUTION

The government increased law enforcement efforts. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) consisted of two entities within the state—the Federation and RS. Each entity has political, legislative, and judicial authority. BD was a self-governing area under the jurisdiction of the state. Entity-level authorities addressed domestic trafficking offenses internal to their territories, and state-level authorities addressed cases with international aspects. Article 186 of the state-level criminal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking only in cases where the victim was exploited in a country in which he or she did not reside or have citizenship; it prescribed penalties of one to 10 years' imprisonment. Articles 210a and 210b of the Federation's criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment. Article 145 of RS's criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of three years' imprisonment. RS amended Article 146 to increase the minimum sentence of child trafficking from five to 20 years. Article 207a of BD's criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently

stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for serious crimes, such as rape.

SPO initiated two investigations on two suspects in both 2021 and 2020 and prosecuted two defendants, compared with one defendant in 2020. State courts convicted one trafficker, compared with no convictions in 2020. State judges sentenced the trafficker to one year of imprisonment. Federation authorities investigated 16 suspects, a significant increase compared with three in 2020. Federation prosecutors prosecuted 11 defendants, an increase compared with three in 2020. Federation courts convicted seven traffickers, compared to 10 traffickers in 2020. Federation judges issued sentences ranging from 21 months to eight years' imprisonment to four traffickers and did not report sentencing information for the other three traffickers. RS authorities investigated two suspects, compared with four in 2020. RS authorities prosecuted one defendant, compared with three in 2020. RS courts convicted two traffickers, compared with no convictions in 2020. RS judges sentenced one trafficker to five years and six months' imprisonment and did not report sentencing information for the other trafficker. BD authorities investigated three suspects in both 2021 and 2020. BD authorities prosecuted three defendants, compared with two in 2020. BD courts convicted one trafficker, compared with no convictions in 2020. A BD judge sentenced the trafficker to five years and two months' imprisonment. The government reported law enforcement personnel suffered from COVID-19 infections, including the majority of officers handling trafficking cases at the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), which delayed some investigations. While judges increasingly issued sentences with significant prison terms, court proceedings lasted many years, and in previous years, judges often issued sentences below minimum penalties by citing unreasonable "mitigating circumstances" to decrease the sentences. Additionally, the government reported traffickers avoided imprisonment by utilizing a law that allowed convicted perpetrators to buy their way out of up to one year of imprisonment for 100 convertible marks (\$60) a day.

SIPA maintained an operational team with 20 officers across four regional offices, and Tuzla Canton in the Federation maintained a specialized trafficking unit in addition to trafficking liaison officers in all police units within the canton. Sarajevo Canton assigned two police officers within each of the seven police stations as liaison officers, but observers reported at least one station head was not aware of who was assigned as a liaison officer. In 2021, the SPO created the Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration and staffed it with three specialized prosecutors. RS, BD, and other Federation cantons did not have specialized officers, although organized crime and corruption units were designated to investigate trafficking. Authorities continued to regularly investigate and prosecute sex trafficking, forced begging, and trafficking cases involving family members under lesser crimes, such as "enticement to prostitution," "child negligence," and "enticement to child prostitution." Law enforcement continued to report that the lack of capacity, resources, and technical knowledge hindered their ability to conduct effective investigations. For example, the government reported difficulties in meeting the evidentiary requirement of trafficking due to a lack of resources and knowledge to conduct specialized investigative measures to corroborate victim testimony. Prosecutors reported they were evaluated on reaching overall monthly case quotas, which incentivized pursuing trafficking crimes as lesser offenses that are easier and faster to prosecute, while police experienced obstacles in investigating trafficking crimes involving multiple cantons or entities, due to a lack of communication and coordination with cantonal prosecutors. The Chief State Prosecutor chaired the anti-trafficking strike force (strike force) that coordinated law enforcement efforts across entities on trafficking cases. In previous years, the strike force was largely ineffective due to a lack of participation and the state failing to disburse operational funds; however, the government approved and allocated 80,000 convertible marks (\$46,400) for honorariums and operational expenses in both 2021 and 2020. The strike force met monthly, and in cooperation with a foreign government in 2020, established a network of prosecutors and investigators to facilitate coordination across BiH; as a result, most prosecutors' offices, except in the RS, appointed a point of contact for trafficking cases to participate in the network. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking crimes. The SPO cooperated with

authorities from Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia on trafficking cases. Additionally, the SPO continued a joint investigative team with Swedish authorities to investigate a forced labor case; authorities charged three suspects in BiH and five suspects in Sweden for trafficking. The government continued its joint investigation with French authorities initiated in 2015 of a BiH and Croatian married couple alleged to have forced six Romani children to pickpocket in France. SPO indicted eight defendants in May 2018, but the court did not order authorities to place defendants in custody during court proceedings, and as a result, one defendant was in Turkey reportedly involved in another forced begging case, two defendants were at-large, and Italian authorities arrested one defendant. In June 2014, the SPO issued the biggest indictment for trafficking in BiH's history against 13 BiH nationals accused of exploiting 672 individuals in the construction industry in Azerbaijan in 2009; judges acquitted all defendants involved in the case in December 2019 and rejected SPO prosecutors' appeals in April 2021. The government reported the lack of bilateral agreements regarding witness protection created obstacles for witnesses and victims to participate effectively in international investigations. Police academies maintained basic courses on trafficking, and the government (with financial and technical assistance from an international organization) trained police, border police, prosecutors, and judges on various trafficking issues.

PROTECTION

The government decreased victim protection efforts. The government identified 61 trafficking victims, a decrease compared with 80 in 2020. Of these, six were victims of sex trafficking, 54 were victims of forced labor, and one victim's exploitation was unspecified; there were six women, one man, 27 boys, and 27 girls; and five foreign national victims. Two bylaws provided SOPs for identifying and referring victims to services, including a list of general indicators, but observers continued to report some first responders did not know or consistently use the guidelines and lacked the knowledge to accurately identify trafficking victims. The government updated SOPs during the reporting period by adding the labor inspectorate, NGOs, and the education system to the list of institutions responsible for victim identification and developed new screening indicators specific to the type of exploitation. The government operated seven drop-in centers for children and a mobile team for vulnerable children in Sarajevo that conducted outreach work. The mobile team identified 150 victims (165 in 2020), and drop-in centers provided children with academic tutoring, hot meals, and laundry services (373 in 2020). The government, with financial and technical assistance from NGOs, established six new mobile teams. However, drop-in centers lacked resources, capacity, and staff and could only provide basic food, workshops, and short-term accommodation for a small number of children. Law enforcement and social workers justified cases of potential forced child begging and forced labor involving Roma as traditional cultural practices and customs and sometimes returned children to their families even when parents were involved in their exploitation; in 2021, prosecutors returned 16 children to family members who were involved in their exploitation. In previous years, first responders, including Border Police, local police, and Service for Foreigners' Affairs, lacked standard guidelines and trafficking indicators for irregular migration flows, interview questions, and interpreters, as well as general capacity to screen the large influx of migrants and refugees. However, the government, in cooperation with an NGO, trained Border Police and staff from the Service for Foreigners' Affairs on identifying victims within irregular migration flows, and as a result, authorities identified four victims within the migrant population accommodated at the temporary reception center in Blazuj—the first time authorities identified victims within irregular migration flows. First responders referred potential trafficking victims to law enforcement, which conducted an interview and had authority to officially recognize victims. However, observers reported the interview and identification procedures lacked transparency, and authorities often required victims to cooperate with investigations and prosecutions to receive assistance and support.

The government did not disburse funds to NGOs due to the lack of a state budget stemming from an extended political crisis. Despite the lack of funding, NGOs continued to provide services to victims in 2021. In 2020, the government partly funded five NGO-run shelters through a victim protection fund with 130,000 convertible marks (\$75,410) administered

by the State Anti-trafficking Coordinator. The government disbursed funds to NGOs based on the number of assisted victims; however, the government amended the 2022 funding requirements to allow all allocated funds to be disbursed—regardless of the number of assisted victims—to compensate for the lack of funding in 2021, provided BiH adopts a budget sometime in 2022. The government, in cooperation with NGOs, provided accommodation, psycho-social support, medical assistance, and legal assistance; however, no mechanisms were in place to assist victims with services outside of shelters, including at centers for social welfare (CSW). While access to care was not standardized and was based on bylaws that were not legally binding, the government, in cooperation with an NGO, drafted guidelines and standards on providing assistance to victims, particularly children. NGO-run shelters allowed victims to leave voluntarily after informing the staff and law enforcement. NGO-run shelters appointed a guardian for each child victim, and one NGO-run shelter accommodated male trafficking victims but did not offer specialized services; NGO-run shelters assisted 56 victims (41 in 2020). Authorities reported developing a reintegration plan for each victim, including vocational training, but the government did not provide funding for reintegration programs, and observers reported victims spent, at times, multiple years at shelters due to slow court proceedings and a lack of reintegration opportunities. The law provided repatriation assistance to BiH citizens identified abroad and foreigners identified in BiH; one victim required repatriation assistance in 2021 and one in 2020. Foreign victims were eligible for a humanitarian visa allowing them to temporarily live and work in BiH, and victims were permitted a 30-day reflection period to determine whether they wanted to request a visa; no victims required a humanitarian visa (one in 2020).

The government penalized victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit due to inadequate identification efforts; authorities penalized victims of sex trafficking, forced begging, and forced criminality with misdemeanor charges for petty crimes with some victims owing 10,000 to 15,000 convertible marks (\$5,800 to \$8,700) after receiving multiple fines. The government reported SOPs incorporated non-penalization standards but acknowledged authorities still penalized victims due to a lack of knowledge of the SOPs exacerbated by frequent rotations and turnover. Sub-state laws against "enticement to prostitution" permitted law enforcement to treat children ages 14 years and older as juveniles willingly engaged in commercial sex instead of victims of rape or sex trafficking; there were six prosecutions of enticement to prostitution in 2020. The law provided witness protection and free legal aid, but lower courts did not possess necessary technical equipment to organize testimonies with adequate protection and confidentiality measures. Additionally, the government relied on an NGO to provide free legal aid but did not disburse funding to the NGO despite an agreement to do so. The government did not consistently conduct victim-centered investigations and prosecutions. For example, prosecutors did not need certification to work with children and often interrogated child victims without a psychologist or social worker present. Police did not consistently notify victims' lawyers when conducting interviews, and some courts required victims to testify with no prior notification or preparation. Victims could obtain restitution through criminal proceedings or compensation through civil suits; in 2019, a district court awarded a victim 7,500 convertible marks (\$4,350), but the victim has not received the restitution because seized properties and assets of the traffickers went toward the state budget rather than restitution. Judges generally rejected restitution in criminal proceedings and encouraged victims to seek compensation by filing civil suits, according to observers, who noted civil suits required victims to submit new testimonies and medical examinations, causing re-traumatization, despite the government convicting their trafficker in criminal proceedings.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent trafficking. The government continued to implement the 2020-2023 national strategy, and the State Coordinator continued to produce annual reports and organized three coordination meetings. The national strategy required the state, Federation, RS, BD, and cantonal governments to adopt their own action plans; the state, Federation, RS, BD, and all 10 cantons adopted their action plans during the reporting period. The government maintained 18 LCTs: 11 in the Federation (10 cantonal and one at the Federation entity

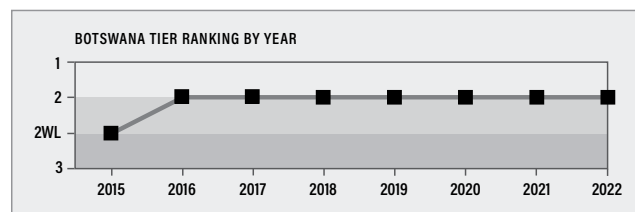
level); six in the RS, and one in BD. LCTs consisted of government and NGO representatives and an MOI official as the coordinator. Sarajevo Canton approved and disbursed honorariums for each LCT member of 300 convertible marks (\$170) per month for an annual total of 72,000 convertible marks (\$41,760). Herzegovina Neretva Canton also allocated 200 convertible marks (\$120) for each LCT member for an annual total of 19,200 convertible marks (\$11,140). The government, with financial and technical assistance from NGOs, trained LCT members, organized discussions with the Romani community on trafficking, and recruited and trained 25 Romani activists to join LCTs. The government, in partnership with civil society, conducted an awareness campaign targeting children, students, and the public. State-level institutions regulated recruitment agencies and required agencies to obtain a license and register, but labor inspectors lacked resources to adequately inspect recruitment agencies and did not report if they inspected any agencies during the reporting period. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. 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 BiH, and traffickers exploit victims from BiH abroad. In 2020, traffickers exploited foreign victims from North Macedonia and Pakistan. In previous years, victims from Afghanistan, Cuba, Gambia, Libya, Serbia, Sri Lanka, and neighboring Balkan countries were exploited in BiH. Traffickers exploit BiH women and girls in sex trafficking within the country in private residences and motels. Romani children are exploited in forced begging, forced criminality, sex trafficking, and domestic servitude in forced marriages. Foreign women and girls from other European countries are vulnerable to sex trafficking within the country. Traffickers exploit BiH victims in sex trafficking and forced labor in construction and other sectors in neighboring Balkan countries and other countries across Europe. Thousands of migrants and refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria, and neighboring countries traveling through, stranded in, or being smuggled through BiH are vulnerable to trafficking, particularly women and unaccompanied children.

BOTSWANA: TIER 2

The Government of Botswana 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, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Botswana remained on Tier 2. These efforts included prosecuting and convicting traffickers and courts sentencing traffickers to adequate prison terms for the first time; cooperating with foreign governments on trafficking investigations; identifying more victims and referring all victims to care; and conducting public awareness activities. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Despite officials' acknowledgment of forced labor of adults and children in the San community on cattle farms, neither law enforcement nor labor inspectors made concerted efforts to investigate or address the crime. The government continued to lack formal procedures to identify and refer victims to care.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Significantly increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, and seek substantial sentences for convicted traffickers. •

Amend the anti-trafficking law to remove sentencing provisions that allow fines in lieu of imprisonment. • Create and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) to identify trafficking victims and refer them to care, and train stakeholders on their use to increase victim identification and screening among vulnerable populations, including the San community, cattle farm workers, migrants, refugees, and Cuban medical workers. • Conduct comprehensive training for prosecutors and judges on Botswana's 2014 anti-trafficking law and workshops to foster collaboration and more effectively adjudicate trafficking cases. • Fund and implement the anti-trafficking National Action Plan (NAP). • Routinely inspect cattle farms, including in Ghanzi, to ensure children are not engaged in forced labor. • Increase access to emergency and long-term shelter, counseling, and medical care for trafficking victims by dedicating adequate funding to NGOs. • Work with NGOs to increase freedom of movement and work opportunities for trafficking victims residing in shelters. • Support the provision of legal identity documents among vulnerable populations, including Indigenous peoples, at-risk undocumented migrants, refugees, and stateless individuals. • Implement strong regulations and oversight of labor recruitment companies, including by eliminating recruitment fees charged to migrant workers and holding fraudulent labor recruiters criminally accountable. • Conduct public awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas.

PROSECUTION

The government increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. The 2014 Anti-Human Trafficking Act criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and defined trafficking broadly to include all child labor. The law prescribed penalties of up to 25 years' imprisonment, a fine of 500,000 pula (\$42,700), or both, which were sufficiently stringent; however, by allowing for a fine in lieu of imprisonment, with regard to sex trafficking, these penalties were not commensurate with those for other serious crimes, such as rape. Section 57 of the 2009 Children's Act criminalized inducing, coercing, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and prescribed penalties of two to five years' imprisonment or a fine of 50,000 pula (\$4,270), or both, penalties which were significantly lower than those prescribed under the 2014 anti-trafficking act. The government drafted amendments to the 2014 anti-trafficking act to align with international standards; however, adoption remained pending by the end of the reporting period. The government and an international organization previously drafted implementing regulations for the 2014 act to make it easier for judges and prosecutors to use and submitted them to the Human Trafficking (Prohibition) Committee, which remained pending approval by the end of the reporting period.

The government reported investigating one sex trafficking case and continuing five case investigations from previous reporting periods, compared with initiating three labor trafficking investigations in the previous reporting period. The government prosecuted two suspects for sex trafficking and continued prosecutions against 17 suspects from previous reporting periods. This compared with two new prosecutions and 11 continued prosecutions in the previous reporting period. The government convicted four traffickers under its anti-trafficking law, two for sex trafficking, one for labor trafficking, and one unspecified, compared with no convictions in the previous reporting period. In the first conviction in two years, the government sentenced a Zimbabwean trafficker to 10 years in prison, which was the first prison sentence in several years and a shift from fines and suspended sentences imposed previously. The government did not report sentences for the other convictions. Pandemic restrictions restricted law enforcement efforts to gather evidence and collaborate with regional partners. The government also reported that border closures resulted in a smaller caseload. Courts did not operate for a significant portion of the reporting period and used virtual courts, when possible, resulting in a backlog of cases. Observers also noted the slow pace of Botswana's judicial system and the lack of qualified interpreters hindered authorities' ability to prosecute trafficking crimes.

The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking crimes; however, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns, inhibiting law enforcement action during the year. Neither labor inspectors nor law enforcement reported investigating private farms in Ghanzi acknowledged by officials to hold San individuals in conditions indicative of forced labor. In addition, observers