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TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

JUNE 2018





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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE



Dear Reader:

Human trafficking deprives millions worldwide of their dignity and freedom. It undermines national security, distorts markets, and enriches transnational criminals and terrorists, and is an affront to the universal values we as Americans hold dear. The use of human trafficking by terrorist groups, such as ISIS and Boko Haram, not only reflects the brutality of these groups, but also acts as a means by which terrorist organizations recruit adherents and finance their operations. Combating human trafficking is not merely a moral issue or one that affects the interests of the American people; it is also an issue that threatens international peace and security.

The United States remains a committed leader in combating this global threat. President Trump has made ending human trafficking a top priority for the Administration and dedicated the government's full resources to fighting this crime. I am proud to lead the Department's dedicated efforts to rid the world of modern slavery. I will continue to strengthen our partnership with Congress, faith-based organizations, the private sector, advocates, and human trafficking survivors, whose voices are critical to developing effective anti-trafficking strategies and public policies. As I have throughout my career, I remain committed to advancing civilian security and preserving human life and dignity.

The *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report* is an essential State Department tool used to shed light on the darkness where modern slavery thrives and to highlight specific steps each government can take to protect victims of human trafficking, prevent trafficking crimes, and prosecute traffickers in the United States and around the world. The findings in this report help inform policymakers, law enforcement, and civil society on gaps and areas of concern, as well as serve as a roadmap forward to end the scourge.

This year's report focuses on effective ways local communities can address human trafficking proactively and on how national governments can support and empower them. Local communities are the most affected by this abhorrent crime and are also the first line of defense against human trafficking. By engaging and training law enforcement, religious leaders, teachers, tribal elders, business executives, and communities, we become more vigilant and learn to identify and address vulnerabilities swiftly. Proactive community-driven measures strengthen our ability to protect our most vulnerable and weaken a criminal's ability to infiltrate, recruit, and exploit. I have experienced firsthand that individuals closest to a problem are often the best resource to solving it, which is why the Department prioritizes equipping and empowering front-line civil society leaders.

Modern slavery has no place in the world, and I intend to ensure, through diplomatic engagement and increased action, that the United States government's leadership in combating this global threat is sustained in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Pompeo".

A boy who labors
on a fishing vessel
stands on the beach in
Bangladesh in front of
his boat.





MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR



Dear Reader:

Human trafficking, also known as modern slavery, is a global threat that touches nearly every corner of the world. The State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report* not only captures the challenges governments and societies face in fighting human trafficking, but highlights effective responses to hold perpetrators accountable, protect victims, and prevent others from enduring this devastating crime. This report serves as a resource for diplomatic engagement and a roadmap to improve anti-trafficking efforts in the United States and around the world.

Governments bear primary responsibility to combat human trafficking, which is why the report's country narratives assess government efforts. Yet, national governments cannot succeed alone; actions at the local level play a critical role. By training and empowering local leaders to protect their communities from traffickers and contribute to broader anti-trafficking efforts, governments and others can multiply the effectiveness of their own efforts. The challenges front-line leaders in civil society, the private sector, and faith-based organizations face are often regionally and contextually specific, requiring locally informed and developed strategies. When combined, national and local efforts can result in greater awareness, targeted interventions, and more effective strategies to combat modern slavery.

This year my visits to two rural communities in Ghana confirmed my belief in the central role of informed, resilient communities. In these villages I observed how traditional leaders and elders worked with volunteers and social workers to develop a common understanding of the dangers of human trafficking and a proactive community approach to mitigate those dangers. These inspiring local leaders described how they learned about trafficking from a Ghanaian NGO, taught others, and took steps to identify suspected child trafficking cases. These communities, and others like them, removed more than 180 children from forced labor and prevented numerous others from suffering such exploitation. The Ghanaian volunteers I met vividly reminded me that when communities are aware and their efforts coordinated, justice and freedom can prevail.

This year's report, while underscoring remaining challenges and gaps in government efforts, also shines light on progress through victim-centered and trauma-informed anti-trafficking policies across the spectrum of governance. I applaud their efforts and encourage them to do even more in the coming year.

Assembling the annual *TIP Report* requires support from many organizations, individuals, and partners. I am especially grateful to the dedicated staff of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the numerous other Department offices, U.S. embassies, and consulates around the world who work tirelessly to bring this report to life. I look forward to continuing frank exchanges with government officials, nongovernmental representatives, and survivors on the recommendations contained in this report and to increasing our collective efforts in the pursuit of a world without modern slavery.

Sincerely,

Kari Johnson



A woman wearing a grey knit beanie, a white face mask, and a pink jacket is picking cotton in a field. She is holding a white plastic bag with a yellow and orange pattern. The background shows a vast field of cotton plants under a clear blue sky.

A woman picks cotton as part of the annual harvest in Uzbekistan. Many rural women serve as voluntary cotton pickers to supplement their income; however, government-compelled forced labor in the annual cotton harvest remains common in Central Asia.



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LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO A GLOBAL PROBLEM: SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon to which no country is immune. Victims of modern slavery are exploited in every region of the world, compelled into service for labor or commercial sex in the real world of industry and on the pages of the internet. The enormity of the problem necessitates the development of a unified, comprehensive response from world leaders to collectively address a crime that defies all borders.

Despite its global reach, human trafficking takes place locally—in a favorite nail salon or restaurant; in a neighborhood home or popular hotel; on a city street or rural farm. Local communities face the realities and consequences of modern slavery, including weakened rule of law, strained public health systems, and decreased economic development, while traffickers profit from the exploitation of others.

International recognition of the devastating effects of human trafficking grows each year. As of the date of this report, governments of more than 170 countries have made public commitments to its eradication, promising punishment for traffickers, care for victims, and action to prevent this crime. The importance of these commitments cannot be overstated.

Yet, the grinding reality of fighting modern slavery takes place not on world stages but through the dedicated actions of individuals to meaningfully implement such commitments—in the slow and often tedious process of building a strong case against a trafficker; the long-term and case-specific provision of comprehensive care for victims; the consistent efforts of civil society partners to strategically raise awareness about human trafficking; and the development of well-planned and evidence-driven preventive policies.

National governments cannot do these things alone. Their commitments to this issue are more effectively realized in partnership with the communities that face it, including local authorities, NGOs and advocates, and individual community members who are often the eyes, ears, and hearts of the places they call home. After all, traffickers exploit the political, social, economic, and cultural contours of local communities, often in ways that would be hard to address fully from a distance. By supporting and empowering these communities, national governments can truly begin to address the individual trafficking cases that collectively make up the larger global issue.

This year's *Trafficking in Persons Report* highlights some of the elements of an effective community-based approach, the challenges in implementing such initiatives, and the opportunities national governments have to facilitate coordination, cooperation, and responsibility-sharing with and between local governments and communities.

USING THE LOCAL CONTEXT TO BUILD THE BIGGER PICTURE

The nature of human trafficking—multifaceted, complex, and clandestine—poses significant challenges for the development of effective anti-trafficking policies. The root causes of the crime are deeper than any one of its facets and relate to larger systemic conditions such as poverty, forced migration, racism, and discrimination, among many others. Understanding human trafficking in its local context is critical to developing a meaningful response.

Traffickers, perhaps instinctively, know this well. Although human trafficking is often associated with organized crime, and in some cases is facilitated by sophisticated criminal syndicates, in many others it is driven by loose networks, families, or individuals operating independently. Using their first-hand knowledge of local systems, behaviors, social structures, and individual interactions, traffickers exploit vulnerabilities, often betraying the trust of their communities.

Traffickers may, for example, prey on the hopes and dreams of parents searching for a way to give their children access to a good education; recognize a vulnerable community's fear of engaging law enforcement officials with a reputation for corruption; or rely on bias and discrimination to keep victims hidden in plain sight. Because of this, the dynamics that facilitate human trafficking will be unique in almost every instance and each jurisdiction will face its own challenges related to culture, environment, resources, and knowledge.

National governments have an opportunity to build stronger, more tailored anti-trafficking strategies through close coordination with sub-national governments and communities, including civil society organizations, survivors, and others working on the ground. Without shifting their responsibility, national governments can enable local authorities to take action to assess the needs of their communities and develop responses that build on existing capacity, capitalize on the expertise of a wide range of actors, and identify and distribute underutilized resources.

Addressing human trafficking requires a dynamic policy framework based on the mutually reinforcing pillars of prosecution, protection, prevention, and partnership. Combining international and national resources with local

knowledge and energy can help all stakeholders create a more comprehensive and focused strategy with a broader reach. National governments should do all they can to pave the way for efforts on the ground, starting with robust anti-trafficking laws that criminalize all forms of human trafficking, tangible support for victim protection, and robust coordination with and resources for the various stakeholders required to combat and prevent this crime.

The following pages seek to encourage individuals and communities to be proactive in addressing human trafficking, while also highlighting several important activities national governments can take to support local efforts. These lists are not exhaustive—there is always more a government can do.

“*I welcome the focus on engaging with local communities to help them to spot the signs of modern slavery. We need to shine a light on this hidden crime and to encourage more victims to come forward so that we can provide them with the support they need.*

- Prime Minister Theresa May,
United Kingdom

VICTIM STORIES

The victim stories included in this *Report* are meant to be illustrative. They characterize the many—though not all—forms of human trafficking and the wide variety of places in which they occur, although each could take place almost anywhere in the world. Many are based on real experiences and the victims' names have been changed as a result. In most cases, the photographs that accompany the stories are not images of confirmed trafficking victims. Still, they illustrate the myriad forms of human trafficking and the variety of situations in which trafficking victims are found.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND CREATING COOPERATION

In the fight against human trafficking, multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical. They must exist vertically between national, regional, and local governments, and horizontally between law enforcement, service providers, and other key actors within and across communities.

At every level, inherent limitations and lack of resources necessitate creativity, collaboration, and help from key partners to develop protocols and processes that punish offenders while caring for victims. Law enforcement, for example, can arrest and prosecute traffickers, but cannot do so well without working in tandem with care providers who offer comprehensive support services to victims. Governments rely on the public to report suspicious activities, and therefore are well-served by providing education and resources to help the public understand indicators of human trafficking. Victims need the support of a variety of actors, while anti-trafficking stakeholders benefit from the input and advice of survivors. Local leaders are well-situated to understand the needs of their communities and how best to implement and adapt national policies to the local level, but necessarily rely on their national governments for funding, expertise, and training.

Thus, to address and prevent human trafficking and care for victims effectively, the expertise, resources, and time of a wide range of stakeholders are necessary. This includes both government and nongovernment entities, each with distinct mandates and roles, which may create competing priorities and conflicting interests that are challenging to coordinate. Building and strengthening a collaborative approach across multidisciplinary perspectives can help communities foster trust between relevant actors and develop systems to provide comprehensive care to victims and robust law enforcement action against traffickers.

Importantly, effective responses to human trafficking require involvement of survivors as key stakeholders. Survivors should be included in the discussion, development, and implementation of anti-trafficking policies or protocols and not be asked to relate—and thereby re-live—the stories of the exploitation they experienced. According to the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, “[s]urvivors play uniquely important roles in combating human trafficking in the U.S. and around the world. As subject matter experts, they provide essential tools that investigators, prosecutors, and communities need to combat and prevent human trafficking.” Thus, wherever possible, survivors should be included in community groups dedicated to combating human trafficking and should be compensated for their expertise and time.

Task forces are an effective means of anti-trafficking coordination, as they facilitate partnerships between local law enforcement agencies, service providers, and sub-national and national regulatory authorities.

For example, in 2017 the Governor of Edo State in **Nigeria** declared human trafficking to be one of his top priorities and created the Edo State Task Force to combat trafficking in persons. It is made up of participants from NGOs, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Nigeria Immigration Services, Benin City Police Commissioner, Edo State Director of State Security Services, IOM Nigeria, and Edo State government executives, including the Attorney General, the Commissioner for Youth, and the Commissioner for Local Governments, among many others. The task force has arrested at least 10 potential traffickers and provided shelter and services to Nigerian victims repatriated from Libya, among other activities.

In **Nepal**, the National Committee for Controlling Human Trafficking (NCCHT) oversees nationwide efforts, with support from both district- and local- level committees. The NCCHT routinely meets with and trains members of the 75 district-level committees funded by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare to support awareness campaigns, meeting expenses, emergency victim services, and the local committees. Furthermore, they collaborate to implement and report on efforts in line with the government’s 2012-2022 national action plan. As of January 2018, there were 732 local committees in operation, overseeing local efforts and identifying and screening for trafficking within their communities. For example, in April 2017, the vigilance team of the local committee in Maadi Municipality, Chitwan District intercepted at the Indian border a 17-year-old girl who had been recruited with promises of education. The vigilance team then reunited the girl with her family, and she is now continuing her education in Nepal. The local committee filed a case against the trafficker at the Chitwan District Court, which sentenced the trafficker to 10 years imprisonment.

In the city of Houston in the **United States**, the Houston Area Council on Human Trafficking has doubled in size since its formation in 2012 and includes 42 member organizations that are direct service providers, prevention and advocacy groups, law enforcement agencies, and private funders. The task force is organized into four sub-groups, each focusing on one of the “3Ps”—prosecution, protection, and prevention—and a fourth P for partnerships. The task force is helping to implement the city’s 91-point strategic plan to combat human trafficking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.



A Rohingya man and his family flee violence in Burma to a refugee camp in Bangladesh. Refugees are vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers when fleeing violence and while residing in refugee camps.



“

The traumatic experiences suffered by victims of human trafficking are beyond comprehension. It is crucial that law enforcement agencies develop strong and enduring partnerships with NGOs and faith-based organizations that are on the front lines of survivor support.”

- Callista Gingrich, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See

A Romanian woman stands outside a greenhouse in Sicily where her employer subjected her to sex and labor trafficking.

In the most basic sense, a task force creates a setting for information-sharing on the roles and resources of anti-trafficking stakeholders in the community. It is also a place to share knowledge about human trafficking from different perspectives so that all participants have a similar baseline understanding of its many forms, as well as of the elements that make certain populations vulnerable to the crime. As the task force matures, it can be a place where participants decide how best to approach the variety of trafficking cases that may arise, whether they involve forced labor or sex trafficking, minors or adults, or foreign nationals or citizens, among other factors.

An inclusive task force can be a unified voice that signals to the community the prioritization of human trafficking and can be a starting point for gathering and consolidating information about local instances of human trafficking and current resources for victims. The purpose of such a group is to create a consistent and coordinated response to human trafficking that is tailored to the community, protects the rights of victims, and holds perpetrators accountable. Moreover, a task force can serve as an effective communication channel between sub- and national-level authorities, providing the foundation for targeted and effective national efforts and an accurate understanding of community needs.

To facilitate coordination, national governments can:

- › Encourage and support the establishment of human trafficking task forces in communities to bring together law enforcement, care providers, and others, and enhance access to human trafficking experts.
- › Provide access to experts to help build local capacity and allocate resources, whether financial or in-kind, over a sustained period and in response to local needs to support local efforts across the “3Ps.”
- › Encourage the sharing of successes and challenges across jurisdictions and ensure budget and policy processes incentivize adaptation rather than the status quo.
- › Empower and encourage sub-national authorities to collaborate with NGOs to develop policies and protocols, as well as formal structures like human trafficking task forces.
- › Where national committees or standing NGO working groups exist, engage a broad array of stakeholders in national anti-trafficking efforts.

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

Communities interested in starting or improving on efforts to confront human trafficking may benefit first from assessing the problem. For example, communities may find value in gaining a better understanding of potentially vulnerable communities, the range of services victims may need, and the current resources available to address those needs. Likewise, assessing the general level of understanding on trafficking-related issues by those likely to come into contact with victims, and the processes in place for victim care and law enforcement action can help set a baseline from which to drive continuous improvement.

In **Haiti**, a prominent NGO has developed a holistic model for community-based action to end the traditional practice of *restavèk*, a system in which poorer, often rural, parents send their children to live and work in the homes of urban families in exchange for room, board, and access to education—a practice that often leads to domestic servitude. The NGO conducted participatory research on the scale of the problem in selected areas and on the underlying socioeconomic factors that allow this type of human trafficking to flourish. Using this information, each community developed a community action plan to prevent *restavèk* and protect the children who may fall victim to it. The NGO also facilitated the creation of the network of adult survivors that has become a powerful mechanism both to raise awareness about human trafficking and to advocate for the involvement of survivors in decisions at the national, regional, and community levels.

In response to concerns about the condition of homeless children forced to beg, the Ministry of Justice in **Georgia** issued more than \$20,000 to two NGOs with the goal of identifying and supporting the reintegration of “street children.” The NGOs identified 105 children living on the streets, learning they were mostly Georgian, Azeri, and Moldovan nationals. The research identified economic hardship, limited education, and “cultural matters” as factors making children more likely to be forced into begging activities, such as selling trinkets, begging for spare change, or engaging in physical work like the transportation of goods. Based on this research and pursuant to recommendations by the NGOs that conducted it, the Ministry of Justice awarded an additional \$10,000 for an awareness-raising campaign. In addition, the Social Services Agency is responding to the NGOs’ recommendations by expanding its facilities in Batumi, which the research identified as a hotbed for “street children” activity during the summer months.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC UNITED STATES

When Raul was in high school in the Dominican Republic, he jumped at the opportunity to go to the United States to continue his education. A family friend offered to be his sponsor and hire Raul in his restaurant while Raul attended school. Shortly after Raul arrived in the United States and began attending the local high school, his sponsor pulled him out of classes and forced him to work in his restaurant full-time for less than \$1 an hour. The sponsor withheld Raul’s passport, threatened him, and sexually abused him. Raul was forced to live in filthy conditions in the restaurant. After an anonymous call to the national hotline, law enforcement officials raided the restaurant and arrested Raul’s sponsor.

The input of experts who work directly with human trafficking victims is vital to a comprehensive assessment, but members of the broader community may also be able to provide valuable insight. Their understanding of the particular dynamics that may lead to trafficking and their ideas for combating it locally should be included in any discussion.

By gaining a better understanding of the current landscape of victim identification, service provision, and law enforcement action, communities can begin to build formalized processes that can help to ensure victims receive a full range of support services.

To assist with information-gathering, national governments can:

- Conduct assessments to understand trafficking at the national level and both encourage and support monitoring and routine reporting from local level stakeholders.
- Develop national and local diagnostic tools to help with the identification of at-risk populations.

NIGERIA

ITALY

Several countries hold pre-departure trainings to teach migrant workers the indicators of trafficking. A participant in one of those trainings is now a peer educator in her community.

Faith was approached by a woman who promised her a job at a Nigerian restaurant in Italy. Faith thought this was her chance to begin a new life, especially as she saw some fellow Nigerians return from Europe better off than when they left. When Faith arrived in Italy, however, she was informed she had to pay back more than \$50,000 in debt before she could leave. Her traffickers forced her into prostitution, telling Faith they would kill her if she did not comply. Faith felt like she was always in danger and was even stabbed several times. She managed to escape and now works to help other women trapped in sex trafficking in Italy.



The United States Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime issued a “Guide to Conducting a Needs Assessment.” The guide states:

One of the first tasks of conducting a needs assessment is to identify what you want to learn about your community. What questions do you need answered to help you develop the best program for victims in your area?

Here are some questions to consider:

- › What victim services are being provided within your community? How accessible are these services (e.g., hours, location, language capacity)?
- › How familiar are the key partners and community members with the issue you are trying to address?
- › Have providers in your area been trained on the issue? What are some additional training needs?
- › What outreach efforts are made to educate the public about the issue and the services you provide?
- › Who in your area is best suited to identify potential victims?
- › Which organizations are currently working with the victims you are trying to help?
- › What types of victims have these organizations seen? Are the victims from other countries? What languages do they speak?
- › What services do the victims need? Are you able to meet these needs? What additional support do providers need?
- › Do you have collaborations in place for working with victims? Are you able to pool your resources?
- › Are there any obstacles to accomplishing your mission? What are they? How can they be resolved?

These are just examples of some of the questions you may want answered about your community. The key partners of your initiative will play an important role in framing the issues to be addressed in the needs assessment. Clearly, understanding and articulating what it is you want to learn will help keep the needs assessment focused and purposeful.

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/docs/resources/OVCTAGuides/ConductingNeedsAssessment/step1.html>

- › Support anti-trafficking efforts for populations that may fall outside of traditional national jurisdictions, such as tribal communities, migrants and refugees, and itinerant populations.
- › Provide a national platform for information-sharing and data collection.
- › Fund studies to better understand successful anti-trafficking community models.

CONDUCTING TRAINING AND RAISING AWARENESS ON VICTIM IDENTIFICATION

While comprehensive structures must be in place to effectively combat human trafficking, the best laws and policies will be ineffective if those most likely to come in contact with victims do not know how to identify them or are not empowered to assist them.

Human trafficking is often described as a crime that is “hidden in plain sight” because victims may interact with others in the community but are unlikely to self-identify for many reasons, including fear of harm to themselves or their family members. For example, victims may come into contact with the criminal justice system, seek medical care, attend school or faith services, work in local businesses, or utilize public transportation. Any interaction with professionals or other individuals in these instances provides an opportunity for identification and assistance. Without training and awareness, however, those positioned to recognize the situation and help may not know the indicators of trafficking or the appropriate way to respond.

Professional Engagement

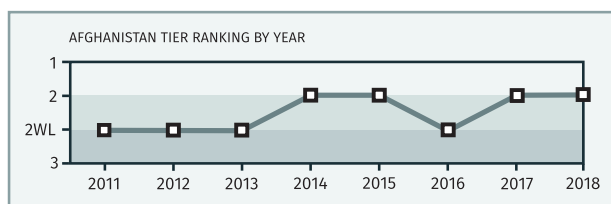
Once a community has identified vulnerable populations and the places they may be most likely to come into contact with professionals, this information can be used to target trainings.

Many victims of human trafficking are likely to come into contact with professionals such as law enforcement officers, health care providers, school administrators and teachers, prosecutors and judges, labor inspectors, transportation providers, and many others.

Studies have shown that the most effective community responses are those in which capacity for victim identification is increased at an institutional and systemic level. In doing so, a community safety net is widened and the burden of identification and care is shared across a spectrum of key actors.

AFGHANISTAN: TIER 2

The Government of Afghanistan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Afghanistan remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by enacting a revised penal code that raised the penalties for human trafficking crimes and criminalized additional activities relating to *bacha bazi*, a practice in which men exploit boys for social and sexual entertainment. The government identified more trafficking victims and partnered with an international organization to draft and finalize a training manual for combating trafficking, including procedures on victim identification and referral. The government enacted a policy for the Afghan National Army that prohibited child recruitment and established procedures for the demobilization and care of children involved in armed conflict. The government also opened an additional child protection unit to prevent the recruitment of children into the security forces and proactively prevented the recruitment of 79 children from April through June 2017. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Despite credible allegations of official complicity, especially in the sexual exploitation, unlawful recruitment, and use of children by Afghan security forces, the government did not report any newly initiated prosecutions or convictions of officials complicit in human trafficking. District and provincial-level officials continued to conflate trafficking and smuggling, and many officials were unable to identify trafficking victims, which resulted in the government's arrest and prosecution of some trafficking victims as criminals. Victim protection efforts were overall insufficient, as the government did not employ standard victim identification protocols during the reporting period, and the one government-owned short-term trafficking shelter closed when donor funding was not renewed.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFGHANISTAN

Cease the unlawful recruitment and use of children by Afghan security forces and demobilize children from state and non-state groups with adequate victim protection and reintegration support; while respecting due process, increase investigations and prosecutions, including of law enforcement and members of the military suspected of being complicit in trafficking such as *bacha bazi*, and convict and appropriately sentence the perpetrators; cease the penalization of victims for offenses committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, including stopping prosecutions for moral crimes and the placement of child trafficking victims in juvenile detention centers; formally adopt and disseminate standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral to rehabilitation services and train officials on their use; amend Chapter 5 of the penal code to increase the penalties for *bacha bazi* in line with penalties prescribed for other forms of trafficking; strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Interior (MOI)'s anti-trafficking/smuggling units, including increasing the number of staff in

each region and ensuring their ability to differentiate between smuggling and trafficking; continue to increase the capacity of the High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Human Trafficking/Smuggling (high commission) to coordinate and report on the government's anti-trafficking efforts; continue to educate officials at national, provincial, and local levels on the definition of human trafficking, as well as identification, protection, and law enforcement strategies; improve efforts to collect, analyze, and accurately report counter-trafficking data; dedicate resources to support long-term victim rehabilitation programs; and proactively inform government officials, especially at the MOI and Ministry of Defense (MOD), of the law prohibiting the recruitment and enlistment of minors, and enforce these provisions with criminal prosecutions.

PROSECUTION

The government increased its overall law enforcement efforts but did not report any efforts to prosecute or convict allegedly complicit officials, and overall trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and convictions remained low for the scale of the problem. The 2017 Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants criminalized sex and labor trafficking, including *bacha bazi*, a practice in which men exploit boys for social and sexual entertainment. The law prescribed penalties between five and eight years imprisonment; aggravating factors increased the maximum sentence to between 10 and 15 years and the imposition of the death penalty if exploitation for armed fighting resulted in the victim's death. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other serious crimes. The government enacted a new penal code, which took effect in February 2018 and replaced elements of the 2017 law. Article 510 of the new criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking, including *bacha bazi*. Article 511 increased the penalties for trafficking offenses by prescribing 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*. 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. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those for other serious crimes, such as rape. The new penal code also created a separate chapter to criminalize *bacha bazi* crimes specifically. Although this chapter explicitly criminalized more trafficking offenses relating to the crime of *bacha bazi*, 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 to prosecute and convict sex traffickers.

During the reporting period, the government reported the investigation of 132 alleged traffickers and the prosecution of 73, including five for attempted human trafficking, an increase compared with the investigation of 103 alleged traffickers and the prosecution of 63 in the previous reporting period. The government reported primary courts convicted 33 traffickers, including four for attempted human trafficking, during the reporting period—the same number of persons convicted in the previous reporting period. Of the 29 convictions for human trafficking, sentences ranged from six months to 21 years imprisonment; 28 required imprisonment of one year or

more, and one sentence resulted in inadequate penalties of six months imprisonment. Of the four convictions for attempted human trafficking, sentences ranged from one year and one month to eight years imprisonment. The government did not report the details of cases, so its response to forced and bonded labor or *bacha bazi* is unknown.

Law enforcement and judicial officials continued to have a limited understanding of trafficking. Dari, the language spoken most widely in Afghanistan, historically used the same word for both human trafficking and migrant smuggling, compounding the confusion. Authorities attempted to address this issue by including separate terms and definitions for trafficking and smuggling in the 2017 law; however, training required to ensure officials understood the new terminology was limited, especially at the local and provincial levels. MOI continued to operate trafficking and smuggling units in each of the 34 provinces and in Kabul, with 16 officers in Kabul and two officers in each province. Officials acknowledged the number of personnel and access to resources and training was insufficient. NGOs and international organizations, with in-kind assistance from the government for venues, conducted 656 capacity-building workshops in 2017 for over 20,000 members of the public, government officials, and civil society members, including religious leaders and lawyers. At the end of the reporting period, the high commission, with technical and financial support from an international organization, finalized a training manual to train Afghan law enforcement agencies including border police, immigration officials, members of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), NGOs specializing in counter trafficking, shelter managers, and community leaders.

Official complicity in trafficking remained a serious and pervasive problem. Some government and security officials reportedly engaged in the practice of *bacha bazi*. Military authorities initiated internal investigations into some of these incidents, but there were no reports that these cases—or any other cases of government officials allegedly complicit in human trafficking—culminated in newly initiated criminal prosecutions, convictions, or the imposition of penalties during the reporting period. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission's 2014 report assessed that most who engage in *bacha bazi* paid bribes to, or had relationships with, law enforcement, prosecutors, or judges that effectively exempted them from prosecution. In February 2017, a district chief of police and six members of the security forces were arrested for allegedly participating in a *bacha bazi* gathering; the district chief of police was fired from his position during the previous reporting period and was still awaiting trial at the end of the 2018 reporting period. The government did not report what action, if any, was taken against the security forces. The UN verified the continued use of children in combat and non-combat roles by the government during the reporting period, including at least seven cases of recruitment by the Afghan National Police, seven by the Afghan Local Police (ALP), and one by the NDS. One of the verified cases of ALP use of children involved two boys exploited in *bacha bazi*. There were reports that pro-government militias, who may have received direct financial support from the Afghan government, employed children in non-combat roles. Observers reported some officials accepted bribes to produce identity documents for boys stating their age was above 18 years old.

PROTECTION

The government increased efforts to identify victims. The government did not compile comprehensive victim

identification, referral, and assistance statistics; however, the high commission reported identifying 476 potential trafficking victims in 2017 compared with 23 victims identified by the government and 93 victims identified by NGOs in 2016. The government attributed the increase in identified victims to rising insecurity and poverty and stated the majority of those identified were teenagers who had been deceived into believing they would be transported to Europe for work; the government did not provide sufficient information on these cases to differentiate among trafficking, smuggling, and other related crimes. The government did not use systematic identification procedures for victims during the reporting period. The government noted district and provincial-level officials continued to conflate trafficking and smuggling and many officials were unable to confidently identify trafficking victims.

In partnership with an international organization, the high commission developed a training manual for government officials and civil society that included indicators of human trafficking and standard operating procedures for the identification and referral of victims to rehabilitation services. The high commission and the international organization finalized the manual at the end of the reporting period and, thus, had not yet initiated its rollout or implementation. Police lacked formal guidelines and funding to provide basic care (including water and food) to victims during investigations. In some instances, police officers paid out-of-pocket for basic victim care. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) provided registration, referral, and social services for trafficking victims, including those repatriated to Afghanistan from other countries; however, it did not provide data on such efforts. NGOs operated 29 women's protection shelters in 21 provinces that provided protection, legal, and social services to female victims of violence, which were available to trafficking victims. The Ministry of Women's Affairs monitored and regulated all women's protective shelters through site visits to ensure compliance with women's centers' regulations and guidelines and hosted national and provincial coordination committees to discuss the findings of visits and to address challenges. Family guidance centers in 19 provinces provided non-residential legal and social services for women and children, including trafficking victims. The Child Protection Action Network (CPAN), a conglomerate of NGOs, civil society, and government entities overseen by MOLSAMD, provided shelter and some protection services to child victims in 110 districts. NGOs operated two shelters for victims of labor and sex trafficking in Kabul, including one specifically dedicated to serving boys under age 18. At times, the government placed child victims in orphanages, although some children in orphanages were subjected to trafficking. The international organization-run, government-owned, short-term trafficking shelter in Kabul closed during the reporting period when donor funding was not renewed. There continued to be no shelters for adult male victims. The government did not encourage victims to participate in investigations; it did not provide adequate support, security, or protective services for victims to safely do so without risk of re-traumatization. Afghan law allows foreign victims to remain temporarily in Afghanistan for at least six months. In 2017, there were no reports of foreign victims identified in Afghanistan.

Authorities sometimes treated victims, including children, as criminals simply for being unchaperoned or for having committed moral crimes; officials continued to arrest, imprison, or otherwise punish victims for prostitution or sex outside of marriage, without regard to whether they had been subjected to forced prostitution, or for escaping from husbands who forced

them into prostitution. Authorities sometimes prosecuted victims for possessing forged identity documents. Article 518 of the new penal code provided that a trafficking victim shall not be prosecuted for crimes committed while being subjected to trafficking or for the possession or use of fraudulent travel documents. Officials sometimes placed male and female victims in prison if they could not be accommodated in shelters. NGOs reported some child trafficking victims were housed in juvenile detention centers, sometimes for several years. Male sex trafficking victims, including those subjected to *bacha bazi*, were in some cases referred to juvenile rehabilitation centers on criminal charges. During the reporting period, four victims of *bacha bazi* who had been previously arrested were released without charges. The government did not demobilize child soldiers associated with governmental or nongovernmental armed groups or provide or refer such children for reintegration support.

PREVENTION

The government increased its trafficking prevention efforts. In August 2017, the high commission became an autonomous government office under the Ministry of Justice; most of the office's staff worked on trafficking among other human rights issues. The broader high commission of 12 ministries and offices met three times in 2017, although not all ministries attended the meetings. A working-level technical committee held eight meetings in 2017 and partnered directly with international organizations and NGOs to implement the commission's policies. Provincial anti-trafficking commissions in 33 provinces coordinated activities to implement policy established by the high commission; however, the high commission reported only 16 were active during the reporting year. The government continued to implement its national action plan scheduled to end in April 2018. The high commission, in partnership with an international organization, drafted its first national report to comprehensively review trends, laws, and societal views on human trafficking; the technical committee supported the research but was unable to compel other ministries to capture and share statistics on trafficking. The high commission, in partnership with international organizations and NGOs, increased its public awareness programs from 22 during the previous reporting period to 210 in 2017, reaching approximately 16,500 members of the public. The government also continued to encourage mullahs to raise awareness through their weekly sermons.

In December 2017, the MOD enacted the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict Policy for the Afghan National Army, which defined the rights of children, prohibited child recruitment, and established procedures for monitoring and enforcement, reporting violations, and rescuing and caring for children involved in armed conflict. In September 2017, MOI opened a child protection unit (CPU), bringing the total to 22 CPUs throughout the country to prevent the recruitment of children into the security forces. According to an international organization, the CPUs prevented the recruitment of 79 children from April through June 2017. The government continued to develop plans for its long-delayed electronic national identification card. The government utilized a policy and action plan for the reintegration of Afghan returnees and internally displaced persons in partnership with the UN; however, the government's ability to assist vulnerable persons, including over 600,000 documented and undocumented returnees from Pakistan and Iran in 2017, remained limited, and it continued to rely on the international community for assistance. The government did not take steps to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or forced labor.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Afghanistan is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Internal trafficking is more prevalent than transnational trafficking. Men, women, and children are exploited in bonded labor in Afghanistan, where an initial debt assumed by a worker as part of the terms of employment is exploited, ultimately entrapping other family members, sometimes for multiple generations. There are entire Afghan families trapped in debt bondage in the brick-making industry in eastern Afghanistan. Most Afghan trafficking victims are children exploited in carpet making and brick factories, domestic servitude, commercial sex, begging, poppy cultivation, salt mining, transnational drug smuggling, and assistant truck driving within Afghanistan. Some Afghan families knowingly sell their children into sex trafficking, including for *bacha bazi*, including some government officials and security forces. There are reports that some law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges accept bribes from or use their relationships with perpetrators of *bacha bazi* to allow them to escape punishment. Opium-farming families sometimes sell their children to settle debts with opium traffickers. Children in orphanages overseen by the government, but run by NGOs, were sometimes subjected to trafficking. Members of the Shia Hazara minority group were victims of forced labor. Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran and internally displaced Afghans are vulnerable to exploitation in sex trafficking and forced and bonded labor.

Men, women, and children in Afghanistan often pay intermediaries to assist them in finding employment, primarily in Iran, Pakistan, India, Europe, or North America; some of these intermediaries force Afghans into labor or prostitution. Afghan women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking and domestic servitude primarily in Pakistan, Iran, and India, including through forced marriages in Iran and Pakistan. 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. Boys, especially those traveling unaccompanied, are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Some Afghan boys are subjected to sex trafficking in Greece after paying high fees to be smuggled into the country. Reportedly, the Iranian government and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) coerce male Afghan migrants, including boys as young as 12, to fight in Syria in IRGC-organized and commanded militias, by threatening them with arrest and deportation to Afghanistan.

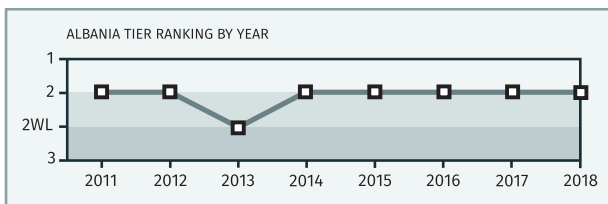
The government and armed non-state groups in Afghanistan unlawfully recruit and use children in combat and non-combat roles. Armed non-state groups, mostly the Taliban, but also including other non-state groups like the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), account for most child recruitment and use. Insurgent groups forcibly recruit and use children as suicide bombers. The Taliban indoctrinate children using religious and military education and teach children to use small arms and deploy improvised explosive devices. Some families receive cash payments or protection in exchange for sending their children to the Taliban-run schools. Children from impoverished and rural areas, particularly those under Taliban control, are especially vulnerable to recruitment. The Afghan Local and National Police and government-supported armed groups use children in combat and non-combat roles, including as personal servants, support staff, and body guards. The Afghan National Army, NDS, and Afghan Border Police also recruit children, although to a lesser extent. There were reports that some members of the Afghan security forces and

other groups of non-state actors sexually abuse and exploit young girls and boys.

There were reports of women and girls from the Philippines, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, and China subjected to sex trafficking in Afghanistan. Under the pretense of high-paying employment opportunities, some labor recruiting agencies lure foreign workers to Afghanistan, including from Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan; the recruiters subject these migrants to forced labor after arrival.

ALBANIA: TIER 2

The Government of Albania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Albania remained on Tier 2. The government increased funding for victim protection, and identified and assisted more victims. The government, in cooperation with NGOs, reactivated mobile identification units in three regions and strengthened child protection within the criminal justice system. The government also admitted one victim into the witness protection program. However, the government did not meet minimum standards in several key areas. The government continued to penalize victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. The government reported fewer prosecutions and convictions, and authorities continued to investigate and prosecute some traffickers for the lesser crime of exploitation of prostitution. The government delayed funding to NGO-run shelters and did not consistently apply victim-centered investigations and prosecutions. Police did not consistently identify trafficking victims among individuals in prostitution, and the labor inspectorate lacked the training to identify victims of forced labor. Identification efforts for forced begging remained inadequate, particularly among unaccompanied children, street children, and children moving across the borders for begging.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALBANIA

Implement the law that exempts victims from penalties for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, particularly sex trafficking victims exploited in prostitution; vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers—including complicit officials—under article 110(a) and 128(b); train investigators, prosecutors, and judges on victim-centered approaches to trafficking cases and increase victim protection from threats and intimidation during court proceedings; continue to train law enforcement, prosecutors, and judicial officials, particularly district prosecutors, on investigating, prosecuting, and trying trafficking cases, including guidance on overlapping elements of exploitation of prostitution and trafficking; allocate adequate funding and resources on a consistent and regular basis to the government-run and NGO-run shelters for trafficking victims; improve the sustainability of mobile identification units; train police, labor inspectors,

and other front-line officials on proactive identification of victims and increase efforts to screen children for signs of trafficking; and adopt a national action plan and allocate sufficient resources to the plan.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts. Articles 110(a) and 128(b) of the criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of five to 15 years imprisonment and a fine between two million lek (\$18,080) and five million lek (\$45,210), which were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The state police investigated 69 cases with 80 suspects (69 cases with 69 suspects in 2016); 22 of these suspects in 2017 were investigated for child trafficking (22 in 2016) and 58 for adult trafficking (47 in 2016). The Serious Crimes Prosecutor's Office (SCPO) prosecuted five defendants (18 in 2016); two of these suspects were prosecuted for child trafficking (nine in 2016) and three for adult trafficking (nine in 2016). Courts convicted seven traffickers (24 in 2016); one trafficker was convicted for child trafficking (11 in 2016) and six for adult trafficking (13 in 2016). All convicted traffickers received prison sentences, which ranged between eight years and eight months to 17 years.

Authorities continued to investigate and prosecute some traffickers for the lesser crime of exploitation of prostitution. Authorities reported the confusion between overlapping elements of exploitation of prostitution and trafficking and at times applied the lesser charge because it required less specialization and time, or due to the false belief that trafficking crimes required a transnational element. The government enacted judicial reforms that will eventually change court jurisdiction for trafficking cases; cases not related to organized crime will soon fall from the Serious Crimes Court to district courts, but authorities reported district prosecutors did not have the experience and capacity to adequately prosecute trafficking cases. The government operated a closed case task force to review successful and unsuccessful trafficking cases; so far the task force has only reviewed two cases. Observers reported limited resources and constant turnover within law enforcement created obstacles in maintaining capacity to investigate trafficking. The government, at times in cooperation with civil society, trained 20 police officers; 100 employees of local law enforcement; 40 border police officers; and 127 judges, prosecutors, and judicial police officers. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses; however, official complicity and corruption were significant concerns. The government signed extradition agreements with the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and conducted joint investigations with Italian and Spanish law enforcement.

PROTECTION

The government maintained victim protection efforts. The government and NGOs identified 105 potential trafficking victims (95 in 2016). Of these, 49 were adults and 56 were children (51 adults and 44 children in 2016), 80 were female and 25 were male (84 females and 11 males in 2016), and nine were foreigners (eight in 2016). Seventy-nine were identified as potential victims and 26 officially identified as victims (62 potential victims and 33 officially identified victims in 2016). A multi-disciplinary national referral mechanism (NRM) provided standard operating procedures (SOPs) for identifying and referring victims to services. The government, with the