



2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Egypt

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 27 June 2017

Cite as United States Department of State, *2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Egypt*, 27 June 2017, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5959ecd84.html> [accessed 14 September 2017]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

EGYPT: TIER 2

The Government of Egypt 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, Egypt remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by creating three specialized courts to prosecute human trafficking cases, prosecuting a government official for alleged complicity in trafficking crimes, adopting a new national anti-trafficking action plan, and conducting several trafficking awareness campaigns and training programs that addressed various forms of trafficking. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government did not report what services, if any, it provided to the majority of the victims it identified. It did not provide shelter services specifically for trafficking victims. The government developed guidance on victim identification and referral procedures, but it did not begin to implement such procedures, and as a result, authorities continued to punish unidentified victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking, such as immigration violations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EGYPT

Improve efforts to proactively identify victims of all forms of trafficking and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) for officials to use the national victim referral mechanism to identify and refer to protection services trafficking victims among vulnerable groups; ensure trafficking victims are not punished for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking; provide and allocate adequate resources for protection services including shelter for victims of all forms of trafficking, including both Egyptian and foreign victims; increase investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of all forms of trafficking and adequately punish offenders, including complicit officials; increase training for all government officials, including judges in the specialized trafficking courts, on implementation of the anti-trafficking law and victim identification and referral procedures; provide a clear legal basis for NGOs to provide victim services; further extend employment protections to cover domestic workers; raise awareness of the specialized trafficking courts among judicial and law enforcement officials; encourage trafficking victims to assist in investigations and prosecutions of their traffickers; and increase ongoing nationwide awareness campaigns.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. The 2010 anti-trafficking law prohibits all forms of human trafficking and prescribes penalties from three to 15 years' imprisonment and fines, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The child law prohibits sex trafficking and forced labor of children and prescribes sentences of at least five years' imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Articles 80 and 89 of the constitution prohibit sex trafficking, compulsory exploitation, and forced labor. In May and June 2016, the government created three specialized courts within

existing appellate courts to prosecute human trafficking cases; however, the government did not report if any trafficking cases were tried in these courts during the reporting period. The government continued to conduct a nationwide data call to gather information on trafficking cases in 2016.

In 2016, the government investigated 23 cases of potential forced child labor, sex trafficking, and domestic servitude crimes, some of which were referred for prosecution; however, these cases also included perpetrators suspected of other crimes such as illegal adoption and organ trafficking, it was unclear how many of the 23 cases actually involved trafficking. This compares to 21 prosecutions in 2015. The government cooperated with the Jordanian government on a potential trafficking case involving the extradition of an Egyptian national; the case was pending at the end of the reporting period. The government reported convicting five Egyptians for trafficking crimes in 2016 compared to three traffickers convicted in 2015. All convicted in 2016 were sentenced to life imprisonment. Three other prosecutions ended in acquittal during the reporting period. The government reported the investigation and prosecution of a government employee complicit in human trafficking offenses. In December 2016, the Public Prosecutor referred to criminal court an Egyptian law enforcement official working in passport control at Cairo International Airport for his involvement with two Saudi Arabian nationals who allegedly operated a gang that fraudulently recruited Indonesian domestic workers to be exploited in Egypt; the three individuals were charged for human trafficking and bribery, and the case remained pending at the end of the reporting period. Some trafficking cases were settled out of court, resulting in a lack of adequate punishment for trafficking offenders. The Ministry of Justice's Center for Judiciary Studies continued to provide compulsory training on human trafficking for newly appointed prosecutors as a part of its curricula; the center also provided training for 84 judicial officials, in collaboration with an NGO. During the reporting period, the government provided 23 anti-trafficking trainings for 331 law enforcement, judicial, and military officials, an increase from 222 personnel trained in the previous reporting period. Additionally, the government provided in-kind support to an NGO that conducted a trafficking workshop in May 2016 for 31 judges covering international trafficking protocols and measures to combat trafficking, strategies to interview trafficking suspects and witnesses, and international cooperation to combat trafficking.

PROTECTION

The government did not improve its weak protection services. The government's national anti-trafficking strategy, adopted in October 2016, provides policy guidance to formalize SOPs to guide officials on proactive victim identification and protection, as well as guidance on operationalizing a National Victim Referral Mechanism. In December 2016, the General Prosecutor's Office began developing guidelines to train its staff on implementation of the SOPs. The national strategy and accompanying law on combating irregular migration includes guidance for officials to protect, rather than treat as criminals, irregular migrant children, a population vulnerable to trafficking. Through the government's anti-trafficking hotline, it identified 65 potential trafficking cases in 2016 among reported cases of child exploitation, organized begging, sexual exploitation, and summer marriages, a decrease from the 173 it identified in 2014 which is the government's most accurate victim identification figure in the last two years. Of the 65 identified victims, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) the government agency leading anti-trafficking efforts referred eight victims to an unspecified government-run shelter or other protective service providers and 16 cases to the Prosecutor General for investigation, but it was unclear if these victims received protection services. The government did not report what protection services if any it provided to the other 41 identified victims. The government repatriated 453 Egyptian nationals from Italy in 2016, an unidentified number of which were identified as trafficking victims. Although Ministry of Manpower inspectors were trained to investigate employers suspected of child labor or trafficking crimes, it did not report identifying any potential trafficking victims or cases during routine inspections in 2016. The government continued to operate a telephone hotline to report trafficking abuses, which included live counseling and legal aid, as well as referrals to law enforcement and NGOs for victim assistance; the hotline received 85 calls during the reporting period. The government did not implement the national victim referral mechanism, which included the services provided by the national anti-trafficking hotline. Ineffective victim identification and referral procedures contributed to authorities punishing some victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. Authorities continued to treat and punish some unidentified trafficking victims as criminal offenders, while foreign trafficking victims remained vulnerable to detention and deportation for illegal immigration or employment violations. The government did not have a policy in place to waive visa overstay fines for foreign trafficking victims that may have accrued during their exploitation. Foreign trafficking victims were not offered legal alternatives to

removal to countries in which they faced hardship or retribution. The government reported that it could provide unspecified temporary residency status to trafficking victims, but it did not report if any victims received this status during the reporting period. The anti-trafficking law guarantees protection of witnesses of trafficking crimes, but the government did not report if it provided protection to any witnesses during the reporting period.

Continued funding constraints hindered NCCM's provision of adequate protection services to victims. The government did not provide shelter services specifically for trafficking victims in 2016, but the NCCM continued to operate a shelter jointly with an NGO that provided services to at-risk children, including potential male child trafficking victims. The government reported 5,590 children received services at this shelter in 2016, but it did not specify how many of them were trafficking victims. The Ministry of Health with international assistance continued to operate a medical recovery unit for foreign and Egyptian, male and female trafficking victims at a Cairo hospital; however, the government did not report if any trafficking victims received assistance at this unit in 2016. The government continued to operate numerous facilities for victims of sexual and physical violence, but it did not report if these facilities assisted any trafficking victims during the reporting period. The government continued to rely on international organizations and civil society to fund victim assistance, and in some cases it publicly acknowledged and cooperated with NGOs in their efforts to provide assistance to victims, but it did not in turn provide financial assistance to these organizations, which affected their ability to offer protective services to victims. Moreover, Egypt's Law on Non-Governmental Organizations hindered legal approvals and registrations for NGOs operating in Egypt, thereby impeding their efforts to provide essential services to victims.

PREVENTION

The government sustained efforts to prevent human trafficking. In October 2016, the government adopted a 2016-2021 national strategy to combat and prevent trafficking, which was approved by the Prime Minister; however, it did not allocate resources towards implementation of the plan. In November 2016, the national anti-trafficking committee merged with the national committee to combat and prevent irregular migration; this newly merged committee falls under the direction of the Prime Minister and is chaired by an ambassador seconded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The government conducted 90 anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns, including educational events in schools, during the reporting period. In June 2016, the government hosted a regional conference that addressed migration, smuggling, and human trafficking issues affecting the Horn of Africa and Europe. The Ministry of Manpower reported that it conducted regular surprise labor inspections, including at worksites that employ foreign workers; it did not report, however, if it identified any potential trafficking victims through these inspections. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor or commercial sex acts, but it raised awareness of the problem of child sex tourism, specifically regarding "temporary" or "summer" marriages of girls for the purpose of commercial sex. The government provided anti-trafficking training for Egyptian troops before their deployment on international peacekeeping missions. The government provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Egypt is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Egyptian children are vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor in domestic service, street begging, and agricultural work. Individuals from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries purchase Egyptian women and girls for "temporary" or "summer" marriages for the purpose of commercial sex, including cases of sex trafficking, as well as forced labor; these arrangements are often facilitated by the victims' parents and marriage brokers, who profit from the transaction. Child sex tourism occurs primarily in Cairo, Alexandria, and Luxor. Egyptian men are subjected to forced labor in construction, agriculture, and low-skilled service jobs in neighboring countries. In 2016, there was a reported increase in Egyptian migrants, including unaccompanied children, arriving in Italy and Greece; these migrants are vulnerable to trafficking in the countries to which they migrate. In 2015, the media reported migrant Egyptian children, including unaccompanied minors, in Italy selling goods in marketplaces and streets, some of whom are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and forced labor; the media also reported criminal networks force some Egyptian children in Italy into criminal activity.

Men and women from South and Southeast Asia and East Africa are subjected to forced labor in domestic service, construction, cleaning, and begging. Foreign domestic workers who are not covered under Egyptian labor laws from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia are highly vulnerable to forced labor, experiencing excessive working hours, confiscation of passports, withheld wages, denial of food and medical care, and physical and psychological abuse. Women and girls, including refugees and migrants, from Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East endure sex trafficking in Egypt. Syrian refugees who have settled in Egypt remain increasingly vulnerable to exploitation, including forced child labor, sex trafficking, and transactional marriages of girls which can lead to sexual exploitation, including sex trafficking, and forced labor. Irregular migrants and asylum-seekers from the Horn of Africa, who transit Egypt en route to Europe, are increasingly vulnerable to exploitation along this migration route. From 2011 to 2013, thousands of cases of forced labor and sexual servitude, smuggling, abduction, and extortion of African migrants in the Sinai Peninsula occurred at the hands of criminal groups. International organizations observed the flow of these migrants into the Sinai declined substantially in 2015, due in part to continued Egyptian military operations. Anecdotal reports suggest these criminal groups have relocated from the Sinai to Egypt's border with Libya, where migrants remain vulnerable to the same abuses, including trafficking. However, Israeli NGOs report that Bedouin groups in the Sinai resumed abuse including trafficking crimes against asylum seekers on a limited scale in 2015. According to victim testimonies, Bedouin groups forced approximately 61 Sudanese asylum-seekers to work in agriculture, tree lumbering, and marijuana growing; these groups physically abused the victims, including beatings and deprivation of food and water and extorted money from them for their release. On average, the Bedouin held the victims captive for one month before releasing them.

Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [Egypt](#)

Topics

- [Child labour](#)
- [Forced labour](#)
- [Migrants](#)
- [Smuggling of persons](#)
- [Trafficking in persons](#)