

# 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Egypt

## EGYPT (Tier 2)

The Government of Egypt 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; therefore, Egypt remained on Tier 2. These efforts included establishing and allocating a budget to a victim assistance fund, providing funding to civil society organizations assisting child trafficking victims, and convicting significantly more traffickers. The government also investigated and prosecuted allegedly complicit officials. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government investigated and prosecuted fewer trafficking crimes and identified fewer victims – the lowest number of victims identified in five years. Despite high trafficking risks for foreign nationals in Egypt, including Sudanese refugees fleeing conflict, authorities rarely proactively identified or provided services to non-Egyptian trafficking victims. The government relied on victims to self-identify or civil society to refer them to government services. Due to inadequate screening among vulnerable populations such as refugees and migrants, the government did not take effective measures to prevent the inappropriate penalization of potential victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, which contributed to ongoing distrust of authorities and reluctance to report trafficking cases.

## PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Significantly improve efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims – especially among vulnerable populations such as migrants, refugees, and domestic workers.
- Increase efforts to publicize the rights of trafficking victims, including the right to government services.
- Consistently refer identified victims to protection services, including shelters, and ensure services are available to victims of all forms of trafficking – including male and foreign victims.
- Review operations of available government shelters and services and ensure they meet the needs of trafficking victims in Egypt.
- Disseminate, implement, and utilize countrywide procedures and guidelines, such as the NRM, for law enforcement, judicial, sub-national authorities, and other relevant officials to proactively identify and refer trafficking victims to appropriate care.
- Increase efforts to ensure authorities do not inappropriately penalize trafficking victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, such as immigration violations or prostitution offenses.
- Ensure the executive regulations of the 2024 asylum law incorporate procedures to screen for trafficking indicators and provide strong protection measures for potential trafficking victims.
- Increase overall efforts to improve protections for Egyptian and foreign domestic workers.
- Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute sex and labor trafficking crimes and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers – including complicit officials.
- Continue to expand coordination with and support to NGOs providing services to trafficking victims and populations vulnerable to human trafficking.
- Consistently enforce regulations and conduct oversight of labor recruitment companies, including by eliminating all worker-paid recruitment fees and holding fraudulent labor recruiters criminally accountable.

## **PROSECUTION**

The government slightly increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts.

The 2010 anti-trafficking law criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties from three to 15 years' imprisonment and a fine between 50,000 and 200,000 Egyptian pounds (\$980 and \$3,940) for offenses involving an adult victim, and up to life imprisonment and a fine between 100,000 to 500,000 Egyptian pounds (\$1,970 and \$9,840) for those involving a child victim. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes, such as rape.

In 2024, the government initiated 76 new investigations of alleged sex and labor trafficking crimes involving 195 suspects, a slight decrease compared with 89 involving 229 suspects investigated in 2023. The 76 new investigations included 31 sex trafficking cases, 34 labor trafficking cases, and 11 cases involving an unspecified form of trafficking. The government also continued 44 investigations initiated in previous years. The government initiated prosecutions of 119 alleged perpetrators (44 for sex trafficking, 42 for labor trafficking, and 33 for an unspecified form of trafficking), a decrease compared with 194 prosecutions in 2023. The government reported 91 prosecutions initiated in previous years remained ongoing. Courts convicted 104 traffickers (40 for sex trafficking, 39 for labor trafficking, and 25 for unspecified forms of trafficking) in 54 cases in 2024, an increase compared with 82 traffickers convicted in 28 cases in 2023. Judges sentenced all convicted traffickers to prison sentences greater than one year.

The government investigated and prosecuted six allegedly complicit officials for trafficking crimes; courts convicted three, while three prosecutions were ongoing. Although not explicitly reported as human trafficking, an international organization reported one new allegation of Egyptian peacekeepers serving in the UN peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic (CAR) for alleged sexual exploitation with trafficking indicators. Separately, the government coordinated with foreign governments to investigate and prosecute traffickers in at least two cases and requested extradition of a suspect in a third.

The Prosecutor General's Office maintained eight specialized offices, one in each appellate court district, which oversaw the prosecution of or directly prosecuted trafficking cases depending on the severity or complexity of each case, alongside their oversight of illegal migration cases. The Ministry of Justice maintained eight specialized judicial circuits in the courts of appeal with 30 judges assigned to prosecute trafficking cases. The government maintained implementation guidelines to guide officials investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes. The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM & TIP), at times in partnership with international organizations, provided anti-trafficking training for officials, including prosecutors, judges, labor inspectors, law enforcement, diplomats, and social workers.

## **PROTECTION**

The government maintained inadequate victim protection efforts.

In 2024, the government reported identifying 195 trafficking victims (68 sex trafficking victims, 89 labor trafficking victims, and 38 victims of unspecified forms of trafficking), a slight decrease compared with 217 trafficking victims identified in 2023 and the lowest number of victims identified in five years. Of the 195 identified victims, 43 were adults (32 women and 11 men) and 152 were children. Nearly all identified victims were Egyptians, while two were foreign victims (one labor trafficking and one sex trafficking); of the 1,415 victims identified by the government since 2020, less than 1 percent have been foreign nationals, despite the extreme vulnerability of this population to trafficking in Egypt. Government officials, NGOs, and international organizations reported the government relied on victims to self-identify rather than proactively identifying victims.

The government maintained an NRM to identify and refer victims; various government ministries, at times in coordination with international organizations, issued reference documents, guides, and handbooks to support efforts to train stakeholders on use of the NRM. However, civil society organizations reported key stakeholders in the NRM were unfamiliar with their role in the NRM and awareness of the NRM at the governate-level needed to be expanded. The government continued to organize working groups to assess implementation of the NRM and develop recommendations to improve its use. As a result of these recommendations, the government trained and positioned a team of liaison officers, typically comprised of Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) social workers, in rapid intervention teams across the country to coordinate the referral of victims in the NRM at the governorate or local level and assist in case management.

The government reported referring 125 identified child trafficking victims to government services, including shelter, psycho-social assistance, medical care, education support, and legal assistance. The government reported providing unspecified support services to all adult victims. The government referred 19 child victims to the specialized government trafficking shelter; the government placed the other referred child victims in child protection shelters or returned them to their families, as appropriate. NCCPIM & TIP cooperated with the MoSS, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), and an NGO to operate the government's only specialized trafficking shelter. The shelter could accommodate 30 female victims, as well as their children ages 12 and younger, and the staff included female psychologists, social workers, and medical staff. Following a 2022 presidential directive to establish seven specialized trafficking shelters, NCCPIM & TIP reported a second specialized shelter for women and girls was scheduled to open in mid-2025. Entering the shelters was voluntary, and the government reported most identified victims declined shelter assistance, preferring to stay with relatives while receiving assistance. The government also partnered with an NGO to operate a shelter for child victims of abuse, which could include victims of trafficking. 13 shelters (in nine governorates) for violence against women, run by MoSS, could receive female and child trafficking victims, including foreign victims; MoSS operated an additional 71 shelters accessible to children throughout the country. Some NGOs stated MoSS shelters did not meet the specific needs of some trafficking victims because of concerns about security, privacy, and a lack of adequately trained staff. The MoSS bylaws stated victims were able to access the shelters without identification documents for up to three days.

The government's ability to provide specialized services to trafficking victims, especially foreign and male victims, remained limited, and it relied on international organizations and NGOs to provide some victim services, including repatriation. NGOs and international organizations reported non-Egyptian victims, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations sometimes sought services from NGOs and international organizations because of distrust of authorities.

Observers stated government resources provided to international and civil society organizations for victim assistance were insufficient to address the scope of the issue. The government allocated 98 million Egyptian pounds (\$1,929,500) from the government's civil society support fund in 2024 to organizations supporting child protection programs, including shelters that assisted child trafficking victims. In August 2024, the president approved a decree to create a victim compensation fund called for in the 2010 anti-trafficking law, and the fund's board of directors approved a budget of 52 million Egyptian pounds (\$1,023,800) to the fund.

The government supported victim assistance in investigations and prosecutions through legal assistance, identity protection, and physical protection when necessary; at least 108 victims received legal assistance during criminal proceedings in 2024. The government did not require victim participation in criminal justice proceedings to receive services; however, an international organization reported victims who chose not to participate often had a more difficult time accessing services, including the government's specialized shelter, in part because of the desire to avoid contact with authorities. To prevent re-traumatization, the government reported prosecutors and law enforcement interviewed victims in the presence of social workers and psychologists, and prosecutors could request to hear victims' testimony in closed court sessions. Female victims of domestic servitude or sex trafficking reported a reluctance to participate in criminal justice proceedings because of the fear of social stigma and retaliation. The government did not report if

prosecutors could pursue restitution in trafficking cases, but victims could file civil suits against traffickers; the government reported no victims filed civil suits during the reporting period.

Due to inconsistent screening among vulnerable populations such as migrants and refugees, the government did not take effective measures to prevent the inappropriate penalization of potential victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. NGOs reported police initially arrested and detained female sex trafficking victims on charges of prostitution or debauchery without screening for trafficking indicators. After NGOs intervened, prosecutors normally declined to prosecute these victims. Some victims continued to face challenges because of their arrest records until they were expunged. NGOs continued to report non-Egyptian victims, including migrants without status, were resistant to report trafficking crimes to authorities because of fear of being detained, being deported, or facing other penalization. In December 2024, the president signed a new asylum law that re-structured asylum processing in Egypt and expedited asylum applications for trafficking victims, among other vulnerable populations; however, experts reported the new law did not meet international standards, and executive regulations for implementation remained pending.

## PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts.

NCCPIM & TIP continued to coordinate inter-ministerial anti-trafficking efforts, including by convening multiple specialized working groups on victim protection issues. The government continued to implement its 2022-2026 national anti-trafficking strategy and devoted resources to it through individual NCCPIM & TIP and member agency budget allocations. NCCPIM & TIP and other governmental entities continued to conduct awareness-raising activities using community meetings, social media, print media, television, and radio, sometimes in partnership with international organizations. The National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women, and NCCM continued operating hotlines to which the public could report trafficking cases; the government identified 11 victims (four sex trafficking and seven forced labor) via hotlines, resulting in seven criminal investigations. The government reported interagency collaboration and collaboration with private research institutions to research human trafficking trends.

Labor Law 12 of 2003 authorized the Ministry of Manpower to regulate labor recruitment and stipulated regulations that governed wages, working hours, and the right to terminate the relationship, and penalties for non-compliance with work contracts. The law allowed companies to collect wages from workers, not to exceed 2 percent, during the first year of employment for administrative expenses. The law also allowed for cancellation of recruitment agency licenses for violations; the government reported suspending the license and closing of at least 15 labor recruitment companies. Egyptian labor law did not include specific protections for domestic workers, which created greater vulnerabilities to trafficking among this population; the government began drafting legislation to improve protections for domestic workers. The NCCPIM & TIP continued to promote a voluntary labor contract employers of domestic workers could use, which offered limited protections for domestic workers. The government maintained a pre-departure guidance unit to educate Egyptian workers traveling abroad about international labor standards and agreements. The government reported Egyptian labor attachés abroad assessed the level of wages and living standards when reviewing work contracts of Egyptians working abroad. Bilateral agreements concluded by the Ministry of Manpower included example work contracts that outlined terms and conditions for appropriate agreements.

In an effort to reduce fraud and exploitation of Sudanese refugees fleeing to Egypt, a population vulnerable to trafficking, the government maintained restrictive regulatory procedures and visa requirements for Sudanese nationals to enter Egypt. These included requiring every person to have their own valid passport and not allowing children to be added to parents' travel documents, as was past practice.

The government reported providing anti-trafficking training to its troops prior to their deployment as peacekeepers. Although not explicitly reported as human trafficking, the government investigated three allegations, one each from 2020, 2021, and 2025 of Egyptian peacekeepers serving in the UN peacekeeping operation in CAR for alleged sexual exploitation with trafficking indicators; during the reporting period, the government and UN closed an investigation of Egyptian peacekeepers serving in the UN peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for alleged sexual exploitation with trafficking indicators from 2023. The government did not report efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or extraterritorial commercial child sexual exploitation and abuse by tourists visiting Egypt.

## TRAFFICKING PROFILE:

Trafficking affects all communities. This section summarizes government and civil society reporting on the nature and scope of trafficking over the past five years. Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Egypt, and traffickers exploit victims from Egypt abroad.

Traffickers subject Egyptian children to sex trafficking and forced labor in domestic servitude, street begging, drug trafficking, quarrying, and agricultural work in Egypt. Traffickers, including some parents, force children to beg in the streets or exploit girls in sex trafficking. NGOs report a lack of economic and educational opportunities causes family members, including parents, husbands, and siblings, to subject women and girls to sex trafficking or forced labor in domestic servitude to supplement family incomes. Extraterritorial commercial child sexual exploitation and abuse occurs in Egypt, primarily in Giza and Cairo. Individuals from Gulf states, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, exploit Egyptian women and girls in “temporary marriages,” also known as “transactional marriages,” for the purpose of commercial sex, including cases of sex trafficking, as well as forced labor; the victims’ parents and marriage brokers, who profit from the transaction, often facilitate these arrangements. Reports indicate some parents force girls into marriages where they are subsequently coerced into domestic servitude or commercial sex. Some husbands coerce their adult wives into sex trafficking or domestic servitude.

Traffickers reportedly subject men and women from East and West Africa and South and Southeast Asia to forced labor in domestic servitude, construction, cleaning, and begging, as well as sex trafficking. Male refugees and migrants are vulnerable to exploitative labor practices, including forced labor. Foreign domestic workers – who are not protected under Egyptian labor laws – primarily from Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and parts of West Africa are highly vulnerable to forced labor; employers, at times, require them to work excessive hours, confiscate their passports, withhold their wages, deny them food and medical care, refuse to provide them with work visas, and subject them to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse – all trafficking indicators. Traffickers subject women and girls, including refugees and migrants from Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East to sex trafficking in Egypt. An NGO reports migrant smugglers recruit economic migrants from the Horn of Africa to travel to Egypt in exchange for work or minimal fees; however, the smugglers then exploit the migrants, in particular unaccompanied children, at various locations along the migration route and in Egypt in sex trafficking, domestic servitude, and forced labor on construction sites in hazardous and exploitative working conditions. Once the migrants arrive in Egypt, the smugglers/traffickers subject them to debt bondage, holding them in captivity until their “debts” are paid. Refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied children, from Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen who live in Egypt are at risk of trafficking. An NGO reported perpetrators coerce some women and girls fleeing the Sudan conflict to perform sex acts in exchange for visas to enter Egypt. Sudanese gangs reportedly target unaccompanied and separated children and force or coerce the children to sell drugs or commit other petty crimes. Undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers from the Horn of Africa, who seek to transit Egypt en route to Europe, are at risk of trafficking along this migration route.

Egyptians illegally migrating through Libya in an attempt to reach Europe are exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor in Libya. Traffickers reportedly exploit Egyptian children in sex trafficking and forced begging in Europe. In Greece, traffickers exploit Egyptian children in sex

trafficking and forced criminality, including drug trafficking, theft, and migrant smuggling, through force and debt bondage. Traffickers subject Egyptian adults to forced labor in construction, agriculture, domestic work, and low-paying service jobs in the Middle East. Traffickers increasingly use online methods to recruit victims; for example, in 2021, media reported a Saudi recruitment agency coordinated with an Egyptian marketing company to use a social media website to fraudulently recruit women into domestic servitude in other parts of the Middle East.