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2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA (Tier 2)

The Government of Sri Lanka does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Sri Lanka remained on Tier 2. These efforts included increasing prosecutions and convictions of traffickers and cooperating with foreign officials on human trafficking investigations. The government identified more victims and supported the repatriation of Sri Lankans abroad. The government also opened its new shelter to support victims of crime, including trafficking victims. The government reformed some restrictive migration policies that had increased vulnerabilities of female migrants to trafficking. The government initiated criminal investigations of recruitment agencies allegedly responsible for facilitating trafficking and canceled licenses and blacklisted more agencies; it also expanded regulation of subagents known to charge high fees and increase migrant vulnerability. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Credible reports of official complicity continued to impede the government's efforts to carry out anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Sentences for convicted traffickers remained lenient. The government may have inappropriately penalized some trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked and did not maintain a consistent victim-centered approach to anti-trafficking efforts.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute suspected traffickers, including labor traffickers and officials allegedly complicit in trafficking, and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers, which should involve significant prison terms.
- Increase efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims, including among undocumented migrant workers abroad and women in commercial sex.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of victim services, ensure shelter and specialized services are available for all identified victims, and provide support to victims who participate in trials against their traffickers.
- Increase monitoring of licensed recruitment agencies and regulation of subagents, referring allegations of criminal violations to law enforcement.
- Promote safe and legal migration, ensure migration regulations do not discriminate based on gender, and increase awareness among prospective migrants of the steps necessary for safe migration and resources available abroad.
- Eliminate all recruitment fees charged by labor recruiters to workers.
- Ensure victims are not inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, including through increased training of law enforcement and the judiciary.
- Increase efforts to address child sex tourism, including proactive identification of victims and investigation of complicit establishments.
- Formalize the domestic work sector and increase oversight of working conditions.
- Provide sufficient resources for labor inspectors and increase identification of labor trafficking and exploitation.
- Increase training for police, prosecutors, judges, immigration officials, and service providers on human trafficking and victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Section 360C of the penal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of two to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine, which were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. The government also used other sections of the penal code to investigate and prosecute sex trafficking crimes. Section 360B criminalized offenses relating to the sexual exploitation of children and prescribed penalties of five to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine. In addition, Section 360A criminalized offenses relating to procurement and prescribed penalties of two to 10 years' imprisonment and fines, significantly lower than those available under the trafficking provision.

The Criminal Investigation Department's (CID) anti-trafficking unit (HTSIMCID) and police initiated at least 34 investigations of 60 suspected traffickers (33 for sex trafficking and 27 for forced labor) and continued 11 investigations of 20 suspects, compared with 16 investigations of more than 63 suspected traffickers during the previous reporting period. The government initiated prosecution against 23 suspects, including 15 for sex trafficking (some of whom had multiples charges with 10 under procurement, 360A; three under the sexual exploitation of children statutes, 360B; and six under the trafficking statute, 360C) and eight for labor trafficking (all under Section 360C), and continued prosecution of at least 239 suspects from previous reporting periods. This compared with 16 prosecutions, including 13 for sex trafficking (five under 360A; five under 360B; and three under 360C) and three for labor trafficking (all under Section 360C) during the previous reporting period. The government convicted four traffickers, two sex traffickers under 360A and two labor traffickers under 360C, and acquitted 22 suspects. This compared to convicting three sex traffickers under Section 360A during the previous reporting period. Courts sentenced one trafficker to pay a fine or face six months' imprisonment while sentencing another trafficker to one year imprisonment and ordered restitution to the victim. By issuing lenient sentences to convicted traffickers, courts created potential safety concerns for trafficking victims and weakened deterrence. The National Child Protection Agency (NCPA) received 128 calls about possible child trafficking, mostly through its hotline, compared to 86 cases of possible child sexual exploitation referred to police during the previous period. Police did not always notify the NCPA about cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children because of a lack of referral procedures. Sri Lankan officials cooperated with law enforcement in Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, and other Middle East countries on human trafficking investigations involving Sri Lankan nationals. The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) referred migrant workers' complaints of potential human trafficking to the HTSIMCID for investigation. Police also arrested recruiters allegedly facilitating the trafficking of migrants in Oman and Laos. The government signed a mutual legal assistance treaty to increase coordination on criminal matters, including trafficking investigations, and an MOU on immigration to enhance cooperation on trafficking-related activities with the Government of Maldives. The government also amended its extradition treaty with the UAE to improve coordination on extradition cases, including trafficking. Law enforcement struggled to investigate human trafficking allegations because of limited resources, including fuel shortages and police personnel diverted to respond to protests during Sri Lanka's political and economic crisis; trials were also postponed because of the pandemic.

Prosecutors' reliance on victim testimony, difficulty securing evidence from victims, and judges' issuance of suspended sentences contributed to the government's general reliance on procurement charges and the lenient sentences applied under Section 360A. Many victims were deterred from participating in criminal justice proceedings because of lengthy trials, a problem endemic throughout the criminal justice system, and social stigma. Most Sri Lankan diplomatic missions did not refer witness and victim affidavits from abroad to the CID for investigation; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently issued instructions in June 2022 for embassies to refer cases to the appropriate institutions. The government did not report allocating any funding to the SLBFE's Counter Human Trafficking Unit, compared with 1.1 million Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) ($3,030) allocated in the previous year. Most police and government officials outside Colombo remained unfamiliar with human trafficking. Members of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (NAHTTF), including the Department of Labor, the Ministry of Justice, the Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women, and other ministries, conducted numerous anti-trafficking trainings for officials and civil society members, and police conducted anti-trafficking training for new recruits. The NCPA developed three sets of guidelines providing child-friendly procedures for police, judicial officers, and probation officers.

Concerns about official complicity persisted; the government investigated some allegations of official corruption but did not report any prosecutions or convictions of allegedly complicit officials, inhibiting law enforcement action. In November 2022, Sri Lankan authorities arrested an SLBFE officer posted to the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman on trafficking charges after months of complaints against the official, including sexual harassment of migrants and involvement in a trafficking network. The case recalled past allegations that some Sri Lankan consular officers sent trafficking victims back to abusive employers and exploitative employment agencies for financial gain when victims fled to embassies for help. Following release on bail, the government reported no action against a local divisional council member, two police officers, or one Naval officer arrested in connection to a child sex trafficking case in July 2021. The government noted an increase in children running away from state-run childcare institutions, including an official promising jobs to runaway youth, although investigators found no evidence of trafficking. In addition, the government reported no outcomes in 19 cases against state-run orphanage employees charged with sexual abuse of children. The government maintained a telephone hotline and online platform for reporting complaints directly to the Inspector General of Police.

PROTECTION

The government slightly increased protection efforts. The government identified 59 victims, all female, compared with 28 victims identified during the previous reporting period. Of the 59 victims, 13 were sex trafficking survivors, 43 were labor trafficking survivors, and three were survivors of sex and labor trafficking; 12 victims were identified in Sri Lanka and 47 were identified abroad. After reports of several Sri Lankan women exploited in domestic servitude in Oman, the government sent officials to Oman to interview and screen potential trafficking victims, facilitate repatriation, and investigate trafficking crimes. The government supported the repatriation of more than 72 potential trafficking victims, including at least 70 from Oman and two from Malaysia. The government sought to repatriate additional Sri Lankan victims of trafficking, including potential victims in Burma and Laos.

The government had SOPs for the identification and referral of potential victims to services; separate SOPs for the identification, protection, and referral of child trafficking victims; and step-by-step guidelines for providing short-term assistance available to all victims of trafficking. NAHTTF members screened some migrants and other at-risk groups for indicators of trafficking and referred potential victims to support services. The Department of Immigration and Emigration intercepted 74 potential human trafficking cases using its SOP at designated ports. The SLBFE continued to screen prospective migrant workers, although officials did not identify any trafficking victims. As in previous years, government identification of trafficking victims remained relatively low despite the significant number of complaints received from workers abroad. The government did not implement its SOPs uniformly and the capacity of local officials to identify trafficking victims remained low, especially among women in commercial sex. Officials did not consistently identify forced labor and sex trafficking that did not involve transnational movement, especially of children, and sometimes categorized such cases as other crimes.

The economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka continued to restrict government resources and constrain government support to trafficking survivors. The government referred at least 54 identified victims to government agencies and an international organization for services, including shelter, psycho-social care, and educational services. This compared to 27 identified victims referred to care in the previous reporting period. The government provided legal assistance to victims of trafficking through the Legal Aid Commission of Sri Lanka. The government also collaborated with civil society to provide support for trafficking victims from Indonesia, Thailand, and Uzbekistan and assist with their repatriation.

The government operated two shelters for trafficking victims that provided for basic needs, medical care, and education services. A magistrate's order was required for victims to receive services at the two shelters. The government provided 1.33 million LKR ($3,660) in assistance to the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment to operate the two shelters for victims of trafficking. The National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses opened a new shelter to support victims of crime, including trafficking victims, and continued work with civil society to develop operational guidelines. No government shelter could accommodate adult male victims, although the government stated it could provide shelter for male victims, if needed. The government partnered with international organizations to provide medical, psycho-social, legal, and reintegration support to victims with court orders, regardless of their decision to cooperate with law enforcement. The Department of Probation and Child Care Services operated 379 childcare institutions that provided services to vulnerable children, including victims of trafficking. The NCPA conducted routine monitoring of childcare institutions using a digital platform; officials identified instances of potential exploitation and trafficking and referred these incidents to police.

The government reported screening for trafficking indicators during law enforcement operations, but officials did not identify any trafficking victims among detained individuals. Officials sometimes charged victims of sex trafficking with commercial sex offenses committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Observers reported a lack of victim-centered approaches, capacity, and sensitization among police, immigration officials, and judges, particularly at the local level, remained an impediment to proper screening for trafficking victims. Some officials may force victims to participate in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases or face penalties.

The Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act of 2015 entitled victims to financial support, including food, accommodations, and transportation to testify or appear in court; 65 trafficking victims reportedly participated in criminal justice proceedings during the reporting period. Some trafficking victims did not participate in law enforcement proceedings because of financial constraints and requirements that victim-witnesses travel to courts. In response, the government allowed victims to transfer court houses, provided transportation for court cases, and offered relocation services during pending trials. The government also allowed testimony through audio and video links in certain cases to prevent re-traumatization of victims, particularly child victims. In addition, the government increased the interim payment provided to trafficking victims participating in criminal justice proceedings from 5,000 to 8,000 LKR ($14-$22). Many victims were reluctant to pursue cases against traffickers because of the social stigma attached with trafficking. When authorities officially identified foreign victims of trafficking, the victims had the same access to services as Sri Lankan citizens. The 2015 SOP on the identification, protection, and referral of victims authorized foreign trafficking victims with a court order to receive repatriation assistance and support services regardless of cooperation with a criminal complaint. Foreign victims who cooperated in prosecutions could receive a visa extension until the end of the trial, although the government did not report issuing visa extensions during the reporting period. Sri Lankan law did not provide foreign victims with legal alternatives to deportation to countries where they might face hardship or retribution after trial completion. The government maintained a victim and witness compensation fund; however, the government did not report providing any funding to trafficking victims during the reporting period. Courts could order restitution from traffickers, and Sri Lankan courts ordered restitution for victims in 55 cases during the reporting period.

The government operated shelters and safe houses at Sri Lankan diplomatic missions in some countries, and the SLBFE allocated 100 million LKR ($275,480) for such facilities in 2022. However, observers reported these facilities were insufficient to meet victims' needs and migrant workers previously reported poor conditions, including inadequate food, unsanitary living conditions, and insufficient legal assistance. Embassy shelters could only accommodate women, so it was unclear where exploited male migrant workers stayed before repatriation. During the reporting period, Sri Lankan missions abroad assisted 134 migrant workers, a decrease from 226 workers in the previous reporting period, with shelter, including potential trafficking victims. Observers reported embassy officials required more training to adequately support potential trafficking victims abroad. The government trained labor attachés after reports that some attachés did not know how to collect evidence of trafficking or refer potential cases to other agencies. The government provided access to legal assistance at Sri Lankan embassies to Sri Lankan workers who had registered with the SLBFE prior to departure; however, the SLBFE previously revised this policy to make resources from its worker's welfare fund, including legal services, medical care, accommodation, and food, available to migrant workers regardless of their registration status. The SLBFE continued to operate a transit shelter near the Colombo airport, primarily for returned migrant workers who experienced abuse abroad. Although the SLBFE maintained district-level offices, it sometimes required repatriated migrant workers to travel to the main office in Colombo to launch an investigation into recruitment and labor violations, including trafficking, hindering overall efforts to hold traffickers accountable.

PREVENTION

The government increased its prevention efforts. The NAHTTF continued to meet regularly under the leadership of the Ministry of Defense, and worked to increase coordination among government and civil society organizations to implement the 2021-2025 NAP. The government trained thousands of ministry officials, including the SLBFE, the Department of Immigration and Emigration, the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crimes and Witnesses, police, the CID, the Ministry of Justice, the Bureau for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Women of the Police, the Department of Labor (DOL), the NCPA, the Attorney General's department, and the foreign ministry, on victim identification, victim assistance, and anti-trafficking laws. The government, sometimes in coordination with an international organization, conducted awareness campaigns through workshops; billboards; and radio, television, and social media programs. The campaigns targeted prospective migrant workers, first responders, as well as the general public; awareness-raising materials were available in Sinhala, Tamil, and English. In addition, Sri Lankan embassies conducted awareness activities for Sri Lankans abroad, particularly in the Middle East. Several government ministries continued to operate 24-hour hotlines that could receive trafficking calls; however, the government did not report how many calls were trafficking-related. The NCPA continued to run a hotline to report child abuse, including child trafficking crimes, and provided online support for referrals via email and text messages; the hotline received 128 reports of alleged child trafficking, compared with 79 reports during the previous year. During the reporting period, NAHTTF began efforts to establish a dedicated trafficking hotline in partnership with an international organization. The government did not have a dedicated budget to combat human trafficking or implement its NAP and relied on previously allocated ministries' general funding to support anti-trafficking activities.

The DOL conducted routine labor inspections. The DOL conducted information campaigns on eliminating child and hazardous forms of labor, including child forced labor. In 2022, the DOL conducted 70,089 routine inspections, the government received 145 complaints of child labor, identified 11 child labor violations, and concluded three court cases with penalties, compared to 38,280 labor inspections, 204 child labor complaints, 178 child labor investigations, and penalties for child labor violations in one case in 2021. Labor inspectors did not identify any cases of human trafficking. Observers noted the amount of labor inspections were insufficient, resulting in many workers vulnerable to abuse. Labor inspectors only had the authority to inspect residences for child domestic worker violations if a complaint was received. However, observers reported the process to formally file a complaint was lengthy and difficult. In November 2022, the government raised the age of adulthood from 16 to 18 years old per the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

In addition, the NCPA began development of a database on child abuse cases, including child trafficking cases, to coordinate agency services during court procedures.

After an assessment of awareness programs, the SLBFE updated its pre-departure training programs for prospective migrant workers and extend required training to 28 days. The government revised some labor migration policies that had negatively affected Sri Lankan women pursuing employment abroad. In July 2022, the MOLFE lowered the minimum age requirement from 25 to 21 years for Sri Lankan women pursuing domestic employment abroad. The government also slightly amended its rules requiring female migrant workers younger than 45 years old to submit a "family background report" to ensure they did not have children younger than 2 years old, a change from previous prohibitions on migration for women with children younger than 5 years old, but still required either a spousal or guardian's consent to work abroad; authorities did not require spousal or guardian consent for male migrant workers. However, observers reported the restrictions left some Sri Lankan women with no legal means to travel abroad and, therefore, without access to protection mechanisms available through authorized travel. Accordingly, the SLBFE's unit at the main international airport in Colombo detected migrant workers attempting to go abroad for employment using tourist visas. The government required licensed foreign employment agencies to submit a semi-annual report confirming the whereabouts of female domestic migrant workers in an effort to mitigate the risk of exploitation while abroad.

The SLBFE required migrant workers to pay a registration fee equivalent to more than one month's salary with renewal necessary every two years. The SLBFE reported no recruitment fees were required for the domestic work sector in the Middle East or professional categories in which employers bear recruitment costs. However, the government did not make efforts to eliminate the legal fees recruitment agencies are allowed to charge migrant workers. The SLBFE reported monitoring the costs charged to migrant workers, although fees varied by destination country, employer, and job category. Despite the SLBFE's efforts to monitor foreign employment agencies, some companies reportedly charged fees in excess of the legal amounts; some workers paid as much as 1 million LKR ($2,750) for the entire recruitment process, including fees charged by illegal subagents.

The SLBFE maintained an online system for registering and responding to migrant worker complaints. Migrant workers continued to report cases of exploitative labor to the SLBFE, including non-payment of wages, contract fraud, and document retention. In 2022, the SLBFE provided 38 million LKR ($104,680) in compensation to migrant workers who received no employment after paying recruitment agents more than the permitted amount. SLBFE officers in the conciliation division attempted to identify trafficking cases to refer to police, although officers sometimes handled cases administratively based on evaluation guidelines. The SLBFE reportedly took action against recruitment agencies during the reporting period, including canceling licenses and blacklisting 57 agencies; this compared to the SLBFE previously canceling the licenses of six recruitment agencies and taking action in 35 cases. The SLBFE continued to evaluate and categorize foreign employment agencies as part of its labor recruitment oversight efforts. The government issued guidelines to prevent subagents and brokers from engaging in corrupt recruitment practices. The SLBFE mandated some changes to the licensing process for recruitment agencies and subbrokers, including minimum recruitment numbers to renew licenses. The government also required police clearance certificates from recruitment agency employees and minimum education requirements for recruiters. Although the government reported that a legislative framework to address subagents existed, the SLBFE did not have the legal authority to regulate subagents, which officials recognized contributed to trafficking. However, some officials had business interests in foreign employment companies, including officials responsible for migrant labor regulatory functions and oversight of grievance resolution mechanisms; officials also had conflicting mandates to increase remittances while providing oversight for worker protections. Similarly, the board of the SLBFE was comprised mostly of employment agencies and lacked adequate representation of migrant workers. The government signed a MOU with the Government of Japan to enhance coordination on migrant labor recruitment and extended a similar MOU to the Government of South Korea.

The government did not report efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. The government initiated plans for a center to screen foreigners in commercial sex for trafficking indicators; the government denied visa extensions and deported people it regarded as vulnerable to trafficking. Officials observed an increase in the use of social media to solicit children for child sex trafficking and anticipated further reports of child abuse, including child sex tourism, in Sri Lanka's Coastal Belt and tourist areas. The government reviewed efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism, and the government conducted information sessions with some hotels to increase awareness of child sex tourism. The SLBFE conducted anti-trafficking trainings for personnel at Sri Lanka's diplomatic missions. The government continued to provide anti-trafficking training to its troops prior to their deployments as peacekeepers.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE:

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Sri Lanka, and traffickers exploit victims from Sri Lanka abroad. The majority of reported Sri Lankan trafficking cases involve traffickers forcing Sri Lankan migrant workers into labor overseas. Economic hardship drove record numbers of Sri Lankan women and men abroad in search of employment where many faced risks of exploitation; children and family members remaining in Sri Lanka experienced heightened vulnerability. Approximately 1.5 million Sri Lankans work in the Middle East, Japan, and South Korea, predominately in construction and domestic work. Sri Lanka's formal migration system requires paying 17,500 LKR ($48) to the SLBFE, but various fees and lengthy applications result in migrants seeking alternative routes for employment through irregular channels. Many migrants travel abroad on tourist visas in search of employment, resulting in increased vulnerability to trafficking, and unregistered migrants may not be able to access government services. The government reports that undocumented migrant workers remain particularly vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking. Within Sri Lanka, traffickers exploit men, women, and children in forced labor and sex trafficking, although women, children, ethnic minorities, and older individuals are often most at risk. Traffickers have increasingly used social media to fraudulently recruit victims. In addition, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and the country's economic crisis have contributed to an increase in cybersex crimes and increased the risk of low-income individuals and other vulnerable groups to sex trafficking.

Traffickers exploit Sri Lankan men, women, and children in forced labor in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the United States in the construction, garment, and domestic service sectors. Before leaving Sri Lanka, many migrant workers accumulate debt to pay high recruitment fees imposed by unscrupulous labor recruitment agencies, most of them members of Sri Lanka's association of licensed foreign employment agencies, and their unlicensed subagents. Some microfinance companies and traffickers target Sri Lankan women with existing debts and use promises of a large advance to defraud them into accepting positions abroad. Some recruitment agencies commit fraud by changing the agreed upon job, employer, conditions, or salary after the worker's arrival. Some recruitment agencies lure workers with promises of work abroad but send them with fraudulent or incorrect documents, including tourist visas instead of work visas, so victims are subject to penalization, including jail and deportation, if they seek assistance abroad. Some Sri Lankan migrant workers in the Gulf countries report employers retained their identification documents, including passports and work permits, which restricts freedom of movement and is a common means of coercion for trafficking.

Observers reported women and girls are disproportionately impacted by human trafficking. The majority of Sri Lankan female migrant workers seek employment in the Middle East, Japan, and South Korea, and thousands of Sri Lankan female migrant workers report that employers exploit them in forced labor in domestic work. Traffickers recruit women from rural areas with promises of urban jobs in the hospitality sector, salons, spas, and domestic work but exploit some in forced labor or commercial sex. Women working in the garment sector experience conditions of forced labor and the threat of sexual harassment. The domestic work sector, mostly employing women and girls, is largely unregulated with working conditions indicative of forced labor and domestic servitude; in addition, in-house domestic workers experience greater risks of exploitation and abuse. Sri Lankan women resorted to commercial sex because of financial hardships caused by the pandemic and the country's economic crisis, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. Some microfinance companies target women with predatory loans and contracts written in English, resulting in debts that forced women to resort to commercial sex or subject their children to sex trafficking to pay off the debt. Some observers have alleged local government and security sector officials forced women to perform commercial sex acts for access to government benefits owed to widows for their deceased husbands' military service. Traffickers also exploit foreign women in commercial sex in Sri Lanka, including migrant workers brought to Sri Lanka on tourist visas.

Sri Lankan children work in the domestic sector, service industry, agriculture, and more hazardous occupations, such as the industrial sector. Some child domestic workers are subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, non-payment of wages, and restrictions of movement, indicators of labor trafficking. Labor traffickers exploit children in small boutiques and informal markets, and traffickers have reportedly exploited children as part of the drug trade in previous years. Child labor is also significant among ethnic minority Tamils on tea and rubber plantations. In addition, traffickers reportedly exploit boys and girls in sex trafficking, including in coastal areas for child sex tourism. In addition to foreign tourists, researchers report local demand drives child sex trafficking in Sri Lanka. Some workers and residents in government and private shelters caring for trafficking victims sexually abuse and exploit some of the institutionalized children.

Observers note that ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka continue to face discrimination and consequently greater vulnerability to human trafficking. Ethnic minorities such as the Malayaha Tamils, whose ancestors migrated from India to work on plantations, continue to experience marginalization and discrimination; Malayaha Tamils sometimes experience bonded labor, particularly on small, private plantations. Members of some ethnic minority communities were unable to report abuses to authorities because of language barriers among officials who only spoke Sinhala.