

# 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Brazil

## BRAZIL (Tier 2)

The Government of Brazil 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, if any, on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Brazil remained on Tier 2. These efforts included identifying more trafficking victims, publishing an assessment of past sex trafficking prosecutions, convicting more perpetrators of slave labor, and continuing to issue regular updates to its public registry of slave labor offenders (the “dirty list”). However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. On average, courts took more than 10 years to finalize convictions of traffickers, contributing to a culture of impunity. Officials continued to punish most labor traffickers with administrative penalties instead of prison, in part due to insufficient evidence collection, which neither served as an effective deterrent nor provided justice for victims. The government reported limited efforts to combat sex trafficking, including among highly vulnerable populations, such as children and LGBTQI+ persons. Many officials demonstrated a misunderstanding of the trafficking crime, hindering efforts to identify victims and hold traffickers accountable. Victim protection mechanisms, including shelter services, remained inadequate and varied substantially by state.

### PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS: ✓

- Train government officials on Law 13.344 to ensure a uniform understanding of the crime and dispel the misconception that trafficking is a crime of movement.
- Vigorously investigate and prosecute traffickers, especially sex traffickers, using the anti-trafficking statute rather than lesser offenses when possible, and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers, which should include significant prison terms.
- Resolve legal proceedings against alleged traffickers expeditiously and without prolonged delays.
- Increase efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims, especially sex trafficking victims, and refer them to services; provide victims shelter and specialized assistance.
- Improve the mobile inspection group’s (GEFM’s) data collection process and increase staffing in the Federal Public Ministry’s (MPF’s) anti-trafficking and anti-slave labor unit to facilitate prosecutors’ participation in GEFM inspections.
- Prosecute labor traffickers in criminal courts.
- Compile comprehensive data on victim identification; victim assistance; and investigations, prosecutions, and convictions, disaggregated between sex and labor trafficking cases, and effectively communicate this data between federal and state authorities.
- Increase the number of specialized anti-trafficking offices, especially in Mato Grosso do Sul, Piauí, Rondônia, Roraima, and Santa Catarina states.
- Improve interagency coordination on anti-trafficking efforts at all levels of government, especially among victim support and law enforcement officials.
- Implement an actionable victim identification, referral, and assistance SOP; train officials on its use.
- Amend the 2016 anti-trafficking law to criminalize child sex trafficking without elements of force, fraud, or coercion in accordance with the 2000 UN TIP Protocol.
- Draft and adopt a new NAP.
- Increase and fund publicity campaigns and other efforts to raise awareness of trafficking, especially in communities along highways where human trafficking is prevalent.

## PROSECUTION ✓

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. Brazilian law criminalized labor trafficking and sex trafficking. Article 149-A of the penal code (trafficking in persons) criminalized some forms of sex trafficking and all forms of labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of four to eight years' imprisonment and a fine, which were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Inconsistent with international law, Article 149-A required force, fraud, or coercion for child sex trafficking cases and therefore did not criminalize all forms of child sex trafficking. However, Article 244-A of the child and adolescent statute criminalized inducing a child to engage in sexual exploitation without the need to prove the use of force, fraud, or coercion and prescribed penalties of four to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine, which were sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Additionally, Article 149 of the penal code (reducing a person to conditions analogous to slavery) criminalized "slave labor," and defined the crime to include degrading work conditions and exhausting work hours, going beyond situations of forced labor in which people are held in service through force, fraud, or coercion. It prescribed penalties of two to eight years' imprisonment and a fine. Prior to the adoption of Article 149-A in 2016, Articles 231 and 231-A of the penal code criminalized some forms of trafficking in persons involving movement; they also prescribed two to eight years' imprisonment. Although Article 149-A replaced these statutes, they were utilized during the reporting period for cases initiated prior to the enactment of 149-A.

Federal authorities reported initiating 263 investigations (19 human trafficking investigations and 244 slave labor investigations), compared with initiating 285 investigations (64 human trafficking investigations and 221 slave labor investigations) in 2021 and 206 investigations (all for slave labor) in 2020. There were 369 ongoing investigations (69 for human trafficking and 300 for slave labor) initiated in previous years, compared with 299 ongoing investigations (53 for human trafficking and 246 for slave labor) reported in 2021. The government reported opening 50 new prosecutions (three for alleged human trafficking and 47 for alleged slave labor) in 2022, compared with 49 new (11 for alleged human trafficking and 38 for alleged slave labor) in 2021 and 14 in 2020. The government reported 690 ongoing prosecutions (90 for human trafficking and 600 for slave labor) in courts of first and second instance, some of which dated to 2013 and earlier, compared with 599 ongoing trafficking prosecutions (43 for human trafficking and 556 for slave labor) in 2021. In 2022, the government reported initially convicting 55 defendants (one for human trafficking and 54 for slave labor) in first and second instance courts, compared with 41 (all for slave labor) in 2021; all initial convictions were subject to appeal, and an unknown number of these initial convictions were decided on appeal. The government reported finally convicting 15 defendants (all for slave labor) in 2022, compared with three final convictions (all for slave labor) in 2021; final convictions could not be retried.

The government had never reported a final conviction under Article 149-A, the anti-trafficking statute, due in part to the excessive duration of trafficking cases. The government continued to report ongoing prosecutions under Articles 231 and 231-A related to alleged trafficking crimes committed before the 2016 adoption of Article 149-A. Observers calculated the average human trafficking prosecution concluded 10.8 years after the commission of the crime; the average slave labor case concluded 7.3 years after the commission of the crime. Brazil allowed successive appeals in criminal cases, including trafficking, and convicted traffickers usually filed multiple appeals over several years before convictions became final. Lengthy case timelines contributed to a culture of impunity for traffickers; a civil society report indicated officials sometimes could not locate accused traffickers in prosecutions unfolding over several years, creating further delays. In cases of exceptional length, the statute of limitations could lapse and courts sometimes dismissed trafficking charges on these grounds. Observers expressed concern the excessive duration of cases discouraged or complicated victims' participation in investigations and prosecutions. The government did not report sentencing data for traffickers convicted in 2022. Civil society observers showed courts sentenced traffickers convicted under articles 231 and 231-A to an average of 4.5 years' imprisonment. However, traffickers' sentences, especially those under four years' imprisonment, often involved alternatives to full-time imprisonment; these punishments – which included

community service, house arrest, and work release programs – were not commensurate with the serious nature of the trafficking crime and did not effectively deter traffickers.

The Brazilian Federal Police (PF) was the primary law enforcement entity charged with responding to trafficking crimes; it maintained central units tasked with investigating slave labor crimes (NUTRAF) and human trafficking and migrant smuggling crimes (SRTP). The PF had staff in every state and participated in the investigation of most trafficking crimes. However, the PF's coordination with state and municipal entities varied considerably across the country. Law enforcement units at all levels had insufficient funding, expertise, and staff to investigate trafficking. MPF had a dedicated unit of prosecutors specialized in slave labor, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling casework; prosecutors oversaw active investigations, working closely with NUTRAF and SRTP. Labor officials had primary authority over cases of slave labor; the Public Labor Ministry (MPT) had a dedicated unit, the Secretariat of Labor Inspections (SIT), which documented situations of slave labor. MPT's labor prosecutors could apply civil penalties and collect back wages for exploited workers. PF and MPF handled the criminal investigation and prosecution of severe slave labor cases and had authority to pursue criminal charges against perpetrators of slave labor, including labor traffickers, although criminal prosecutions of slave labor cases were uncommon relative to the number of slave labor cases recorded. Many government officials pursued administrative penalties over criminal proceedings in cases of slave labor, citing swifter processing and more immediate benefits for victims in the form of back wages and compensation. MPF prosecutors relied on labor inspectors' reports to build criminal cases against alleged perpetrators of slave labor; however, most inspection data did not meet evidentiary standards and case files often reached prosecutors several years after inspections took place, making it difficult to collect additional evidence. Officials reported sharp improvements in evidence collection when prosecutors participated in inspections; however, MPF prosecutors could only attend 25 percent of slave labor inspections due to staffing limitations. Interagency coordination and data collection efforts were severely inadequate and critically interfered with prosecution efforts. The government stored data across multiple databases at the federal and state level, delaying information-sharing, limiting coordination, and making it difficult to obtain and analyze comprehensive data.

Government officials broadly misunderstood human trafficking, with municipal and state officials demonstrating less familiarity with the trafficking crime than their federal counterparts. Officials widely considered human trafficking, especially sex trafficking, to be a crime of movement. Some officials conflated human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Observers reported police and other officials occasionally misclassified trafficking cases, leading to the under-reporting and under-prosecution of trafficking crimes. Authorities' limited understanding of sex trafficking led them to concentrate their efforts on transnational sex trafficking cases involving female Brazilian victims exploited abroad. Anecdotal reports indicated some officials did not recognize individuals in commercial sex as potential victims of exploitation. Further, the government continued to treat forced labor as a crime distinct from human trafficking; most Brazilian officials did not consider forced labor to be a form of human trafficking, likely based on an outdated definitional understanding predating Law 13.344. Consequently, investigations of forced labor under the anti-trafficking statute were rare and almost all human trafficking cases involved alleged sex trafficking crimes. According to some government officials, judges demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the irrelevance of initial consent and sometimes failed to recognize trafficking crimes when the victim initially consented to jobs or services traffickers later compelled them to perform. When authorities encountered individuals in situations of commercial sexual exploitation, including potential victims of sex trafficking, they sometimes misidentified them as victims of slave labor and referred them to labor officials.

Corruption and official complicity remained significant concerns, inhibiting law enforcement action during the year. The government reported initiating one new investigation involving a police officer suspected of trafficking crimes; the investigation remained ongoing at the end of the reporting period. The government did not report any additional developments related to cases of official complicity from previous years, including the October 2016 investigation of an elected official who was arrested and removed from his position in Parana state after allegations of his involvement in a child sex trafficking ring. Similarly, there were no updates on the prosecution's appeal of an

inadequate sentence given to a civil police investigator in 2016 for his involvement in a sex trafficking ring involving children. During the reporting period, the government offered limited training opportunities in partnership with civil society organizations, such as a training for judicial officials on groups vulnerable to trafficking. The government reportedly required new labor judges to complete a training on slave labor, but it did not report offering the course in 2022; by contrast, 76 new judges completed the training in 2019, the last year for which data was available. The government continued to participate in a U.S. program designed to prevent suspected child sex tourists from entering the country. The government reported coordinating with British and U.S. counterparts, as well as international law enforcement entities, on trafficking cases. In one such case, the PF coordinated with an international organization to arrest a suspected labor trafficker and identify 10 Brazilian victims he recruited on behalf of a criminal organization, which in turn exploited the victims in forced criminality in Burma-based cyber scam operations.

## PROTECTION ✓

The government increased protection efforts. The government reported identifying 588 trafficking victims in 2022, compared with 441 trafficking victims in 2021. Among these victims, there were 355 men, 179 women, 29 boys, and 25 girls; the government did not specify how many were victims of sex trafficking or labor trafficking. The government also reported identifying 2,575 victims of labor exploitation during 462 slave labor inspections, compared with 1,937 victims during 443 inspections in 2021; however, the government did not specify how many, if any, of these were trafficking victims, as opposed to victims of other forms of exploitation. As in previous years, the government did not report the number of victims of forced labor, as defined under international law, it identified. In a 2022 analysis, officials assessed as probable trafficking victims 1,694 of 1,959 victims of labor exploitation identified in 2021, compared with 223 of 943 labor exploitation victims identified in 2020; the same analysis described approximately 45 percent of slave labor victims identified since 2016 as probable trafficking victims. Observers suggested the government devoted insufficient resources to identifying victims of slave labor in female-dominated sectors, such as domestic work. Brazil did not have a centralized database to track victim identification and service provision, which made it difficult to analyze data, perform year-to-year comparisons, and draw conclusions. Several agencies at various levels of government collected victim data; however, each agency used its own methodology, limiting the ability to share information across institutions. Civil society reports noted the demographic profiles of trafficking victims varied considerably across available sources based on the populations to which each entity catered and the datapoints it collected; the Ministry of Health's records, for example, frequently included more female victims than did law enforcement sources. Victim identification efforts varied from state to state; select rural states, such as Parana, often identified an outsized share of the victims identified in a given year, while others, including more populous states, identified relatively few. Victim services providers relied on the same inspection documents as prosecutors and frequently lacked critical data to locate and refer victims to services. Officials routinely failed to follow up with identified victims and refer them to services due to incomplete victim records; in one state, officials estimated only 30 percent of slave labor victims' profiles had adequate contact information.

The government did not have an updated SOP for identifying or assisting trafficking victims; according to observers, officials at the state and local levels could create their own SOPs but many continued to rely on victim identification guidance from 2013, which predated the 2016 anti-trafficking law. However, the government had an SOP for assisting slave labor victims, the National Flow for the Assistance of Slave Labor Victims, and SIT inspectors provided slave labor victims with pamphlets outlining available resources. Some state governments prepared their own SOPs; the state of Rio de Janeiro had an SOP which combined procedures for assisting trafficking and slave labor victims. SIT identified victims of slave labor through unannounced inspections of businesses or employers suspected of using slave labor. SIT had a mobile team (GEFM) that conducted multidisciplinary inspections of rural worksites in remote areas, accounting for one-third of slave labor inspections in 2022. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security's (MOJPS's) eight "advanced posts" supported recently-arrived migrants at airports and bus stations; authorities at the posts could screen for trafficking indicators. However, authorities in most states did not proactively or consistently identify victims of sex trafficking, child sex tourism, or forced labor outside the

slave labor context. Law 13.344 mandated the government provide victims with temporary shelter; legal, social, and health assistance; and protection against re-victimization. Authorities did not implement the law consistently across states. The government had a resource guide for service providers on victim identification and assistance. The government did not report training any officials to use the National Flow or other victim identification resources during the reporting period.

The government did not have specialized services for trafficking victims. Instead, officials could refer trafficking victims to a range of non-specialized services, such as healthcare, literacy programs, and transportation; state and local governments furnished many available services, which varied by location. Authorities operated one municipal-level and 18 state-level anti-trafficking offices (NETPs), which served as a point of contact for victims who had been identified by any entity, including NGOs, and connected victims with service providers. NETPs could refer victims of adult sex trafficking to Specialized Social Service Centers (CREAS) serving vulnerable populations, victims of forced labor to the SIT, and child victims of trafficking to guardianship councils. Most agencies with equities participated in the NETPs' interagency network of anti-trafficking stakeholders, but NETP facilities and resources were unevenly distributed across the country. Ten states did not have an NETP facility. Federal funding for NETPs was insufficient to adequately fund or equip facilities; wealthier states, such as Sao Paulo, supplemented their NETPs' budgets, allowing for more effective assistance and coordination teams comprised of police officers, prosecutors, labor inspectors, labor prosecutors, and mental health professionals. The government reported NETPs assisted 397 potential trafficking victims in 2022, compared with assisting 156 potential victims in 2020, the most recent year for which data was available. Adult victims referred to CREAS could receive assistance from non-specialized psychologists and social workers; the government reported its network of CREAS assisted 588 victims in 2022, compared with 441 victims in 2021. Many, but not all, slave labor victims received three months of unemployment insurance following their identification; the government reported that 1,499 of 2,575 slave labor victims (58 percent) received unemployment insurance in 2022, compared with 1,687 of 1,937 victims (87 percent) identified in 2021. Slave labor victims were also eligible for non-specialized services offered by federal, state, and local authorities; the government had more systematic means of furnishing these services to slave labor victims than to trafficking victims. Eight states participated in state-run Integrated Action Programs, opt-in programs that streamlined the provision of services, such as vocational training, job placement, and psychosocial support, to victims of slave labor.

The government did not fund specialized or long-term shelters for men, women, or children trafficking victims. Although most NETPs did not provide services to victims directly, some NETPs and CREAS could provide limited short-term shelter. Officials could also place trafficking victims in any of a network of federal-, state-, and civil society-operated shelters serving vulnerable populations, such as migrants, individuals experiencing homelessness, victims of domestic violence, and the elderly. In practice, only a few of these shelters served trafficking victims. In 2019, the most recent year for which data was available, 32 of the 3,700 federal shelters reported providing services to at least one trafficking victim each. The state of Sao Paulo had two main shelters where trafficking victims could receive assistance: a state-funded shelter where female victims and their children could receive health benefits, education, food, and housing for three to six months and an NGO-operated shelter that provided temporary assistance for refugees and trafficking victims. When space in these shelters was unavailable, Sao Paulo officials housed trafficking victims in other non-specialized shelters and, occasionally, hotels. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second most populous city, had specialized services for slave labor victims, funded via asset seizure, but not trafficking victims. Guardianship councils, responsible for child trafficking victims, often lacked the expertise and resources to adequately identify, refer, and support them. Authorities did not report providing training to any guardianship council social worker on the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking, in 2022, 2021, or 2020, compared with training 242 social workers in 2019.

Authorities sometimes penalized victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, including foreign women forced to transport drugs. The government had measures to encourage victims to testify against traffickers, including allowing remote live video testimony.

However, authorities have never reported using these measures in trafficking cases. Observers continued to express concern about the under-reporting of trafficking crimes, attributing it in part to victims' lack of awareness of protection services and fear that filing complaints would lead to further exploitation, deportation, or other harm. The law entitled foreign victims of trafficking or violations to a residence permit. The government reported issuing eight residence permits to slave labor and/or human trafficking victims in 2022, compared with 16 residence permits in 2021 and 12 in 2020. The government could assist trafficking victims with repatriation, but authorities have not reported supporting the repatriation of any victims since 2017; civil society organizations, however, reported supporting the repatriation of one foreign victim exploited in Brazil and five Brazilians exploited abroad. Although Brazilian law allowed victims to seek restitution in criminal or civil proceedings, the government did not report any victims requesting or receiving restitution in 2022; officials indicated lengthy case timelines discouraged prosecutors and victims from pursuing restitution.

## PREVENTION ▼

The government slightly decreased efforts to prevent trafficking. The MOJPS oversaw the inter-ministerial group responsible for the implementation of the 2016-2022 NAP; MOJPS did not report the amount of funding it dedicated to the plan's implementation in 2022 or 2021, compared with a budget of 443,840 reais (\$83,970) in 2020. The NAP expired without replacement at the end of 2022. The MOJPS also funded the seven-member CONATRAP advisory committee, which included representatives from federal government agencies and NGOs. The National Council of Justice partnered with a university and civil society institution to conduct and publish, in December 2022, a historical review of trafficking prosecutions. Coordination between agencies at the national and state levels remained uneven and varied in efficacy. At the state government level, officials from different agencies in 16 states coordinated to address trafficking independently from the federal government and in a decentralized manner through the state NETPs.

Most awareness-raising efforts in Brazil focused on addressing child or slave labor more broadly; few campaigns attempted to raise awareness of human trafficking, sex trafficking, or child sex tourism. Throughout the year and to commemorate World Day against Trafficking, municipal and state governments hosted workshops, trainings, performances, and roundtable discussions to raise awareness of human trafficking. Officials in Pernambuco distributed posters in the state's bus stops as part of a broader anti-trafficking campaign. The government continued to work with NGOs to produce awareness materials. The federal government continued its national campaign to promote regularization of domestic workers' employment status and raise awareness of the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation within the profession. The government maintained two human rights hotlines that could receive trafficking-related calls. Hotline operators could refer victims to local resources including police, state prosecutors' offices, social workers, guardianship councils, CRAS, CREAS, and the labor inspectorate. The government reported receiving 213 trafficking-related calls, including 103 calls originating in foreign countries, to these hotlines in 2022, compared with 156 calls related to human trafficking in the first half of 2020. The government did not indicate whether it initiated any investigations from calls to the hotlines. Some states, including Sao Paulo, operated their own human rights hotlines.

Authorities did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. However, authorities made efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor. The SIT published a "dirty list," or *lista suja*, twice annually; the dirty list made public the names of individuals and businesses found guilty of using slave labor. The October 2022 list included 183 employers, compared with 66 employers in October 2021 and 113 in October 2020. The SIT added 95 new employers to the list in October 2022, compared with 32 employers in 2021 and 44 in 2020. Government policy instructed Brazilian financial institutions to limit access to credit for individuals and companies on the list; the government reported its civil lawsuits against seven banks that continued extending credit to businesses included on the "dirty list," initiated in 2019, remained ongoing in 2022. Officials indicated the government's staff of labor inspectors was insufficient to adequately perform inspections across the country; the government had not hired new inspectors since 2013. Labor

inspectors had access to an online course on slave labor, but the government did not report how many inspectors utilized this programming.

## TRAFFICKING PROFILE: ✓

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Brazil, and traffickers exploit victims from Brazil abroad. Traffickers exploit women and children from Brazil and from other South American countries, especially Paraguay, in sex trafficking in Brazil. Gangs and organized criminal groups have subjected women and girls to sex trafficking in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. Traffickers also exploit Brazilians in sex and labor trafficking abroad in Western European countries, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and other countries. Traffickers lure Brazilian women abroad with false promises and exploit them in sex trafficking; traffickers also fraudulently recruit adults to travel to Southeast Asia for jobs in technology or customer service and then exploit them in forced labor in cyber scam operations. Traffickers have exploited Brazilian men and transgender women in sex trafficking in Spain and Italy. Most identified trafficking victims are people of color, and many are Afro-Brazilian or otherwise of African descent; 63 percent of trafficking victims served at NETPs in 2020 identified as Black or Brown. Many identified trafficking victims are from northeast Brazil, especially Maranhao.

Migrants – especially Bolivian, Filipino, Haitian, Paraguayan, PRC national, and Venezuelan migrants – and people living near Brazil's border areas are vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking. Traffickers have exploited PRC national women in sex trafficking in Rio de Janeiro. Traffickers increasingly rely on online advertisements, social media platforms, and other digital means of recruitment. Victims of slave labor, including trafficking victims, are highly vulnerable to re-victimization. Experts indicated the government convicted fewer than 5 percent of entities charged with slave labor. Transgender women are one of the most vulnerable populations in Brazil. According to a 2019 study, 90 percent of transgender women in Brazil engage in commercial sex and, of those in Rio de Janeiro, more than half are in a situation at high risk for human trafficking. Demand for transgender women in commercial sex in Brazil is elevated relative to other countries, as are rates of violence against transgender women. Traffickers often require transgender victims to pay them for protection and daily housing fees. When they are unable to pay, traffickers beat them, starve them, and force them into commercial sex. Traffickers deceive transgender Brazilian women with offers of gender-affirming procedures and exploit them in sex trafficking when they are unable to repay the cost. Traffickers exploit children in sex trafficking along Brazil's highways, including BR-386, BR-116, and BR-285. Child sex tourism remains a problem, particularly in resort and coastal areas; many child sex tourists are from Europe and the United States.

Traffickers exploit Brazilian men – notably Afro-Brazilian men – and, to a lesser extent, women and children, in situations that could amount to labor trafficking in both rural areas (including in ranching, agriculture, charcoal production, salt industries, logging, and mining) and cities (construction, factories, restaurants, and hospitality). Traffickers exploit adults and children – from Brazil, Bolivia, Haiti, Paraguay, the PRC, and other countries – in forced labor and debt-based coercion in many sectors, including construction, the textile industry (particularly in Sao Paulo), and small businesses. Traffickers exploit Brazilians in forced labor for some producers of sisal fiber, sugar, coffee, garlic, charcoal, and carnauba wax. Brazilian women and children, as well as girls from other countries in the region, are vulnerable to forced labor for domestic servitude in Brazil. Traffickers force Brazilian and foreign victims, especially from Bolivia, South Africa, and Venezuela, to engage in criminal activity, including drug trafficking, in Brazil and neighboring countries. Cuban medical workers who departed Brazil in 2018 after the Cuban government ended Cuban medical worker participation in Brazil's Mais Medicos program continued to pursue a class-action lawsuit against an international organization for its role in their alleged exploitation. In the lawsuit, Cuban workers who were part of the Mais Medicos program in Brazil allege they were forced to work by the Cuban government as part of a triangular arrangement facilitated by an international organization. In 2022, Brazilian authorities announced plans to restart the foreign medical workers program, which may include Cuban medical workers who remained in Brazil after Cuba ended the Mais Medicos program; however, these workers were not affiliated with the Cuban

government. NGOs and officials report some police officers ignore the exploitation of children in sex trafficking, patronize brothels, and rob and assault women in commercial sex, impeding identification of sex trafficking victims.