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2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: China

CHINA: Tier 3

The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; therefore the PRC remained on Tier 3. Despite the lack of significant efforts, the government took some steps to address trafficking, including by prosecuting and convicting some traffickers, and by continuing to cooperate with international authorities to address forced and fraudulent marriages in the PRC, a key trafficking vulnerability for foreign women and girls. However, during the report period there was a government policy or pattern of widespread forced labor, including through the continued mass arbitrary detention of more than one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and other Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). Authorities also expanded the campaign into other provinces, began implementing it among other religious minorities, and sought the coerced repatriation and internment of religious and ethnic minorities living abroad. For the third consecutive year, the government did not report identifying any trafficking victims or referring them to protective services.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Abolish the arbitrary detention and forced labor of persons in internment camps and affiliated manufacturing sites in Xinjiang and other provinces and immediately release and pay restitution to the individuals detained therein. • End forced labor in government facilities, in nongovernmental facilities converted to government detention centers, and by government officials outside of the penal process. • Cease the use of harassment, threats, and illegal discriminatory immigration policies as measures to coerce the return to Xinjiang and subsequent forced labor of ethnic and religious minorities living abroad. • Cease discriminatory hiring and targeted displacement policies that place Muslim and other minority communities at risk of trafficking. • Cease all forced urban resettlement and displacement programs, particularly those targeting Uyghurs, Tibetans, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. • Respecting due process, vigorously investigate, prosecute, and impose prison sentences on perpetrators of forced labor and sex trafficking, including complicit government officials. • Criminalize all forms of sex trafficking and labor trafficking as defined under international law. • Institute and systematize proactive, formal procedures to identify trafficking victims throughout the country—including male victims, labor trafficking victims, PRC national victims returning from abroad, and victims among vulnerable groups, such as migrant workers, PRC national and foreign fishermen, foreign women, North Korean workers, and PRC national women and children arrested on “prostitution” charges—and train front-line officers on their implementation. • Increase oversight of seafarer labor conditions in the PRC fishing industry. • Cease penalization of victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit. • Immediately screen individuals suspected of prostitution offenses for sex trafficking indicators and refer identified victims to protection services. • In conjunction with receiving countries, increase efforts to detect and prevent abusive migrant labor contract provisions placing PRC national workers at higher risk of forced labor. • Ensure authorities do not subject trafficking victims to extended detention, punishment, or deportation. • Expand victim protection services, including comprehensive counseling and medical, reintegration, and other rehabilitative assistance for male and female victims of sex and labor trafficking. • Provide legal alternatives to foreign victims' removal to countries where they would face hardship or retribution, particularly North Korea. • Increase the transparency of government efforts to combat trafficking and provide disaggregated data on investigations and prosecutions, victim identification, and service provision, including by continuing to share relevant data with international partners.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts, including by continuing to apply extensive law enforcement and paramilitary resources toward the mass detention and forced labor of Uyghurs and members of Muslim and other ethnic and religious minority groups. The criminal code criminalized some forms of sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Various provisions of the criminal

code could be used to prosecute sex trafficking offenses. Article 240 criminalized “the abduction and sale of women or children,” which included abduction by deceit, kidnapping, purchasing, selling, sending, receiving, and transferring for the purpose of sale; however, unlike the definition of trafficking in persons under international law, Article 240 did not explicitly link these acts to a purpose of exploitation. Article 240 prescribed penalties of five to 10 years’ imprisonment and fines for the abduction and sale of women and children. If an abducted woman was then forced into prostitution, the penalties increased to 10 years’ to life imprisonment, fines, and confiscation of property. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Article 241 criminalized the purchase of abducted women or children and prescribed a maximum penalty of three years’ imprisonment, short-term detention, or controlled release; like Article 240, it did not require the purchase be for the purpose of exploitation. Penalties under this provision were not alone sufficiently stringent; however, Article 241 stipulated that if an individual purchased an abducted woman or child and then subjected them to “forcible sexual relations,” the individual would face additional penalties under the criminal code’s rape provisions. Article 358 criminalized forced prostitution and prescribed penalties of five to 10 years’ imprisonment; if the offense involved a child under the age of 14, the penalties increased to 10 years’ to life imprisonment in addition to fines or confiscation of property. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Article 359 criminalized harboring prostitution or luring or introducing others into prostitution, and it prescribed a maximum of five years’ imprisonment and a fine; if the offense involved a girl under the age of 14, it prescribed a minimum of five years’ imprisonment and a fine. These penalties were sufficiently stringent; however, the penalties prescribed for offenses involving girls 14 to 17 years of age were not commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Labor trafficking offenses could be prosecuted under Article 244, which criminalized forcing a person “to work by violence, threat, or restriction of personal freedom” and recruiting, transporting, or otherwise assisting in forcing others to labor, and prescribed three to 10 years’ imprisonment and a fine. These penalties were sufficiently stringent.

The central government did not capture or report comprehensive law enforcement data, and it continued to report statistics for crimes outside the definition of trafficking according to international law (including migrant smuggling, child abduction, forced marriage, and fraudulent adoption), making it difficult to assess progress. Some courts reportedly continued to prosecute trafficking crimes under laws pertaining to domestic violence, labor contract violations, and child abuse, all of which prescribed lesser penalties. For the third consecutive year, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) did not report the number of investigations initiated into possible trafficking cases, compared to 1,004 in 2016. Media reports, however, suggested authorities continued to investigate some cases. Data published by the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) indicated it prosecuted 638 cases of “women trafficking and child abduction” along with 538 cases of “forced prostitution” and 38 cases of forced labor, each involving an unknown number of total defendants, compared to at least 634 trafficking cases in 2018; 1,146 in 2017. Upon conclusion of these cases, courts convicted and sentenced a total of 2,355 individuals—an increase from 1,252 in 2018 and 1,556 in 2017. As in prior years, authorities did not disaggregate conviction data by the relevant criminal code statutes, and courts reportedly prosecuted the vast majority of these cases under Article 358—especially for those involving commercial sexual exploitation—rather than under Article 240. The government did not provide sentencing data, but media reports indicated penalties imposed in at least two sex trafficking cases ranged from five to ten years’ imprisonment and fines to the death sentence. In previous years, media reported penalties ranging from five months’ imprisonment with fines of 74,000 renminbi (\$10,630) to life imprisonment.

The government handled most cases with indicators of forced labor as administrative issues through the Ministry of Justice and seldom initiated prosecutions of such cases under anti-trafficking statutes. Authorities engaged in law enforcement cooperation with an unknown number of foreign governments to investigate cases of PRC citizens subjected to trafficking abroad, including in South and Southeast Asia. As part of similar efforts in previous years, PRC authorities attempted to extradite—and criminally charge—PRC and Taiwanese individuals subjected to forced labor in Europe. During the reporting period, the government maintained consultative partnerships with law enforcement authorities in Mongolia and the five Lower Mekong countries to jointly address trafficking via the forced and fraudulent marriage of their citizens to PRC-based individuals. Some law enforcement personnel in neighboring countries reported their PRC counterparts were unresponsive to requests for bilateral cooperation on cross-border trafficking cases, while others reported the PRC’s cumbersome law enforcement bureaucracy hindered joint operations.

For the second consecutive year, the government did not provide data on specific law enforcement trainings, unlike in prior years. However, according to an international organization, the government continued to allocate funding to co-host capacity-building training for law enforcement and judicial officials on investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases. The PRC continued to implement a nationwide campaign initiated during the previous reporting period to investigate corrupt local officials and police officers allegedly using their influence to shield or profit from criminal organizations engaged in commercial sex rings; this included efforts to address sex trafficking. In previous years, officials found guilty through this process reportedly faced expulsion from the

Chinese Communist Party, termination of their official positions, fines, and referral to the judicial system. However, authorities did not provide statistics on the number of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions resulting from this campaign. Despite continued reports of law enforcement officials benefiting from, permitting, or directly facilitating sex trafficking and forced labor, the government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of law enforcement officials allegedly involved in the crime. PRC authorities at times intervened in foreign governments' attempts to investigate wealthy or government-connected PRC nationals suspected of trafficking crimes abroad. Officials at multiple levels were also complicit in state-sponsored forced labor as part of the PRC's mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against members of ethnic and religious minority groups, and some officials reportedly profited directly from this system; authorities reportedly subjected Tibetans and members of other ethno-religious groups to similar abuses.

PROTECTION

The government decreased efforts to protect victims. For the third consecutive year, the government did not report the number of victims it identified, although media reports indicated authorities continued to remove some victims from their exploitative situations. Based on court data and media reports, authorities did not identify any male victims during the reporting period. Authorities claimed to have tracked and rescued more than 4,000 missing children through the use of an app-based system, including as many as 120 trafficking victims, but they did not provide any information on formal identification or referral measures for these children. The PRC lacked a standardized national referral mechanism, but MPS maintained written instructions promulgated in 2016 for law enforcement officers throughout the country aiming to clarify procedures for identifying trafficking victims among individuals in commercial sex and forced or fraudulent marriage. MPS officials reportedly maintained a procedure to screen for trafficking indicators among individuals arrested for alleged prostitution. A 2016 policy limiting the detention of such individuals to 72 hours remained in place. Despite the existence of these procedures, and contrary to the aforementioned policy, law enforcement officials continued to arrest and detain foreign women on suspicion of prostitution crimes without screening them for indicators of sex trafficking—sometimes for as long as four months—before deporting them for immigration violations. In previous years, rural border officials received reports involving the sex trafficking and forced labor of Burmese and Mongolian women and girls via forced and fraudulent marriage to PRC national men, and officials provided them with temporary shelter and helped to fund and escort their repatriation. However, observers noted this assistance was ad hoc and less prevalent among front-line officers working farther inland, where some foreign victims escaped, reported these abusive circumstances to the authorities, and were summarily arrested and forcibly returned to their PRC “husbands”—sometimes in exchange for bribes from the men's families. The government reportedly detained foreign seafarers in connection with illegal shipping practices senior vessel crew may have forced them to carry out. Because authorities did not universally implement identification or referral procedures across law enforcement efforts, it was likely police arrested and detained unidentified PRC trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit.

In prior years, the government reported maintaining at least 10 shelters specifically dedicated to care for PRC trafficking victims, as well as eight shelters for foreign trafficking victims and more than 2,300 multi-purpose shelters nationwide that could accommodate trafficking victims; it did not provide information on these shelters in 2019. The Ministry of Civil Affairs, a nationwide women's organization, and grassroots NGOs could provide victims with shelter, medical care, counseling, legal aid, and social services, as well as rehabilitation services in some cases. Access to specialized care depended heavily on victims' location and gender; experts noted ad hoc referral procedures and an acute lack of protection services in the south, and male victims were far less likely to receive care nationwide. The government did not report how many victims benefited from these services, and widespread stigma against victims of sex trafficking likely continued to discourage many from accessing protection services. Implementation of a law placing foreign NGOs in the PRC under MPS supervision continued to impose burdensome requirements and restrictions on the activities of civil society organizations, including those able to provide services for trafficking victims and communities vulnerable to the crime. Foreign embassies in the PRC reportedly provided shelter or other protective services to victims. Authorities did not condition access to victim care on cooperation with law enforcement, but they did require victims to provide information to police. The law entitled victims to request criminal prosecution and claim compensation through civil lawsuits against their traffickers; the government did not report whether any victims benefited from this provision. Some forced marriage cases, many of which continued to demonstrate corollary indicators of sex trafficking and forced labor, were mediated at the village collective-level; these proceedings rarely culminated in a guilty verdict through which victims were granted restitution. The judicial system did not require victims to testify against their traffickers in court and allowed prosecutors to submit previously recorded statements as evidence; however, authorities required some foreign victims to stay in the PRC to assist in police investigations until their conclusion.

The efficacy of the government's previously reported victim assistance abroad—including its eight border liaison offices with Burma, Laos, and Vietnam, along with victim funds, hotlines, and government-to-government agreements to assist victims—was unclear. The government did not report data on victim repatriation in 2019, but civil society groups confirmed authorities repatriated some East- African, South American, and Southeast Asian victims to their countries of origin. International civil society groups reported the PRC's diplomatic missions were often unresponsive to complaints filed by PRC national victims of forced labor overseas, particularly in Japan. Authorities also reportedly interfered in the provision of protection services to some Chinese victims identified overseas. The government did not undertake efforts to identify trafficking victims within its highly vulnerable North Korean migrant population, nor did it provide suspected North Korean trafficking victims with legal alternatives to repatriation. Authorities continued to detain North Korean asylum-seekers and forcibly return some to North Korea, where they faced severe punishment or death, including in North Korean forced labor camps; the government did not report screening these individuals for indicators of trafficking. In compliance with a UN Security Council resolution, the government reportedly repatriated some North Korean labor migrants; Chinese authorities did not screen them for trafficking indicators or offer options to legally remain in the country. The government continued to restrict access of UN agencies attempting to monitor and assist refugees near China's border with North Korea.

PREVENTION

The government decreased efforts to prevent trafficking, including by expanding the implementation of discriminatory policies designed to subjugate and exploit minority populations in forced labor. State-sponsored forced labor continued under the government's mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against more than one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and members of other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang. The government expanded this campaign through the transfer of more than 80,000 detainees into forced labor in as many as 19 other provinces during the reporting period, according to NGO estimates and media reports. Authorities continued to carry out discriminatory surveillance and ethno-racial profiling measures to illegally detain members of these communities in internment camps under the pretext of combating violent extremism. Many detained individuals approved to “graduate” from these facilities were sent to external manufacturing sites in close proximity to the camps or in other provinces and subjected to forced labor, while others were transferred and potentially subjected to forced labor within a separate formal prison system. According to official PRC government documents, local governments at times arrested Muslims arbitrarily or based on spurious criminal charges and administrative violations, including violation of birth restrictions, in order to meet detention quotas established specifically for this internment system. Reports indicate authorities partially staffed internment camp facilities using forced labor, including among Mandarin language instructors. Authorities also used the threat of internment to coerce members of some Muslim communities directly into forced labor in manufacturing. The MFA confiscated, canceled, or refused to renew the passports of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims living abroad, including those with legal permanent resident status or citizenship in other countries, as a coercive measure to lure them back to Xinjiang and likely detain them within the camps. There were also reports that authorities threatened these individuals' families in Xinjiang to force their return. The government also transferred thousands of these detainees, along with non-interned minority communities designated arbitrarily as “rural surplus labor,” to other areas within Xinjiang as part of a poverty alleviation program and exploited them in forced labor. Local governments and businesses received tax breaks and financial subsidies for establishing new manufacturing sites and accepting or transferring detainees for these purposes, and officials reportedly received promotions and other benefits for their role in the process. Nationwide, some school districts reportedly compelled ethnic Han students to participate in internship programs featuring forced labor indicators.

Authorities held a seventh annual inter-ministerial meeting to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts. MPS continued to coordinate the anti-trafficking interagency process and led interagency efforts to implement the 2013-2020 National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking, including research into the efficacy of national efforts to combat the crime, and the government reportedly continued formulating a draft version of its next iteration. For the third consecutive year, the government did not report the extent to which it funded anti-trafficking activities in furtherance of the action plan, compared to more than 55 million renminbi (\$7.9 million) in 2016. It used traditional and social media and distributed posters and other materials at transportation and community centers to increase general understanding of the issue, including among vulnerable rural communities, but much of the content focused on child abduction. Academics and experts noted the gender imbalance created by the previous One-Child Policy and provisions of its successor, the Two-Child Policy, likely continued to contribute to trafficking crimes in the PRC. The government reportedly continued implementing a series of pilot programs to enable Cambodian and Vietnamese citizens to enter legally into southern PRC for work in hopes of stemming illicit labor migration through especially porous sections of the border; the extent to which this mitigated trafficking vulnerabilities—or to which it was implemented—was unknown. NGOs in countries receiving PRC national migrant workers through bilateral agreements reported the PRC government ignored abusive and potentially illegal contract stipulations, including fees and provisions requiring

immediate repatriation for pregnancies or illnesses, which placed some PRC national workers at higher risk of debt or punitive deportation as coercive measures to retain their labor. Observers reported insufficient oversight of the PRC’s extensive fishing industry continued to leave PRC national and foreign seafarers at high risk of forced labor.

The government *hukou* (household registration) system continued to contribute to the vulnerability of internal migrants by limiting employment opportunities and reducing access to social services, particularly for PRC national victims returning from exploitation abroad. The government continued to address some of these vulnerabilities by requiring local governments to provide a mechanism for migrant workers to obtain residency permits. However, these residency permits were disproportionately unavailable to China’s minorities, exacerbating their constrained access to employment and social services. The government made no efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. The government did not report investigating or prosecuting any Chinese citizens for child sex tourism, despite widespread reports of the crime.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers subject domestic and foreign individuals to trafficking in China, and they subject Chinese individuals to trafficking abroad. Traffickers also use China as a transit point to subject foreign individuals to trafficking in other countries throughout Asia and in international maritime industries. Well-organized criminal syndicates and local gangs subject Chinese women and girls to sex trafficking within China. Traffickers typically recruit them from rural areas and take them to urban centers, using a combination of fraudulent job offers and coercion by imposing large travel fees, confiscating passports, confining victims, or physically and financially threatening victims to compel their engagement in commercial sex. China’s national household registry system (*hukou*) continues to restrict rural inhabitants’ freedom to legally change their workplace or residence, placing China’s internal migrant population—estimated to exceed 180 million men, women, and children—at high risk of forced labor in brick kilns, coal mines, and factories. Some of these businesses operate illegally and take advantage of lax government enforcement. African and Asian men reportedly experience conditions indicative of forced labor aboard Chinese-flagged fishing vessels operating in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans; men from other regions may be in forced labor aboard these vessels as well. Women and girls from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and several countries in Africa experience forced labor in domestic service, forced concubinage leading to forced childbearing, and sex trafficking via forced and fraudulent marriage to Chinese men. Traffickers target adults and children with developmental disabilities and children whose parents have left them with relatives to migrate to the cities—estimated at more than 60 million—and subject them to forced labor and forced begging. State bodies subject members of Muslim minority groups to forced labor as part of arbitrary mass detention and political indoctrination schemes.

State-sponsored forced labor is increasingly prevalent in China. In 2013, the National People’s Congress ratified a decision to abolish “re-education through labor” (RTL), a punitive system that subjected individuals to extra-judicial detention involving forced labor, from which the government reportedly profited. The government closed most RTL facilities by October 2015; however, the government reportedly converted some RTL facilities into state-sponsored drug rehabilitation facilities or administrative detention centers where, according to civil society and media reports, forced labor continues.

State-sponsored forced labor is intensifying under the government’s mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). Authorities have utilized discriminatory surveillance technologies and arbitrary administrative and criminal provisions to detain more than one million ethnic Muslims, including Uyghurs, ethnic Hui, ethnic Kazakhs, and ethnic Kyrgyz, in as many as 1,200 “vocational training centers”—internment camps designed to erase ethnic and religious identities. Camp authorities reportedly force some individuals to work in staff positions within the camps, including in Mandarin language instruction. Following “graduation” from these facilities, the government subjects many of these individuals to forced labor in adjacent or off-site factories producing garments, carpets, electronics, bedding, hair products, cleaning supplies, and other goods for domestic and international distribution. Coercive conditions reportedly include threats of physical violence, forcible drug intake, physical and sexual abuse, and torture. Local governments have reportedly used the threat of internment to coerce some members of these communities directly into forced labor. A small number of ethnic Han Chinese individuals and members of other religious minority groups, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, are also reportedly in detention within this system. Authorities offer subsidies incentivizing Chinese companies to open factories in close proximity to the internment camps and to receive transferred detainees at satellite manufacturing sites in other provinces. Local governments receive additional funds for each inmate forced to work in these sites at a fraction of minimum wage or without any compensation. The government has transported tens of thousands of these individuals to other areas within Xinjiang and to other provinces for forced labor under the guise of poverty alleviation and industrial aid programs.

Authorities in some localities also subject the families of men arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang to forced labor in their absence. Contacts report families separated by this system are more likely to fall below the poverty line and are therefore at higher risk of sex trafficking and forced labor. Authorities are increasingly placing the young children of interned Muslims in Xinjiang in state-run boarding schools, orphanages, and “child welfare guidance centers,” and forcing them to participate in political indoctrination activities and report on their families’ religious activities. Authorities reportedly place older children among these groups in vocational schools, where some may be victims of forced labor. Some Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani citizens are arbitrarily detained while visiting family in Xinjiang; their children, now unaccompanied abroad, are also at elevated risk of trafficking. NGOs report ethnic Han men may be increasingly able to force Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim women into marriages under the government’s discriminatory ethnic assimilation policies, placing them at higher risk of forced labor in domestic service and other forms of exploitation.

Xinjiang authorities issued a notice in 2017 abolishing rural obligatory labor under the *hashar* system, in which thousands of Uyghur adults and children were reportedly subjected to forced labor in government infrastructure projects and agriculture each year. Despite this policy change, similar forms of state-sponsored forced labor continue in Xinjiang, including under the auspices of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (Bingtuan)—an economic and paramilitary organization with administrative control over several areas in the region. According to NGO reports, Bingtuan regiments manage at least 36 agricultural prison farms throughout Xinjiang; unlike the aforementioned mass detention campaign, this system primarily subjects ethnic Han Chinese inmates—many of whom may be victims of arbitrary detention—to forced labor. Bingtuan authorities also force inmates to build new prison facilities in several areas of the province and may subject inmates to forced labor in coal and asbestos mining. Uyghur adults and children are reportedly forced to pick cotton under direction of the Bingtuan. The impact of formal discriminatory employment policies barring Uyghurs from jobs in many sectors—including in the annual cotton harvest—reportedly drives thousands of Uyghur farmers out of their communities in search of alternative work, placing them at higher risk of forced labor. The same is true of the government’s targeted forced-displacement programs, including the Bingtuan’s construction of new settlements designated for ethnic Han internal migrants, which reportedly disperses Uyghur communities and disrupts their livelihoods.

The government reportedly subjects some Tibetans to arbitrary detention featuring similar political indoctrination and forced prison labor practices in the Tibet Autonomous Region (Tibet) and neighboring provinces. Authorities also reportedly subject some Buddhist clerics to political indoctrination activities and forced labor in monasteries repurposed as factories. The government’s forced urban resettlement programs reportedly require Tibetans to bear a large portion of resettlement costs, placing many of them in debt and consequently at higher risk of forced labor. Elsewhere, religious and political activists held in legal education facilities continue to report forced labor occurring in pretrial detention and outside of penal sentences. The government subjects Christians and members of other religious groups to forced labor as part of detention for the purpose of ideological indoctrination; survivors report having been forced to work in brick kilns, food processing centers, and factories manufacturing clothing and housewares. Law enforcement officials detain some PRC national and foreign women on prostitution charges without due process in “custody and education” centers, where they are subjected to forced labor. International media report local authorities force children in some government-supported work-study programs to work in factories. Some school districts compel students into forced labor in manufacturing under the guise of mandatory internships.

Traffickers subject PRC national men, women, and children to forced labor and sex trafficking in at least 60 other countries. They force PRC national men, women, and girls to work in restaurants, shops, agricultural operations, and factories in overseas Chinese communities. Some are promised jobs abroad and confined to private homes upon arrival overseas, held in conditions indicative of forced labor, and compelled to conduct telephone scams. PRC national men in Africa and South America experience abuse at construction sites, in coal and copper mines, and in other extractive industries, where they face conditions indicative of forced labor, such as non-payment of wages, restrictions on movement, withholding of passports, and physical abuse. Traffickers have reportedly subjected PRC nationals to forced labor in the manufacturing of medical masks for the prevention of COVID-19 in South Africa. Traffickers subject PRC national women and girls to sex trafficking throughout the world, including in major cities, construction sites, remote mining and logging camps, and areas with high concentrations of PRC national migrant workers. Companies operating under the auspices of the Japanese government’s “Technical Intern Training Program” have exploited PRC nationals in forced labor in food processing, manufacturing, construction, and fishing. Traffickers also subject undocumented PRC national seafarers to forced labor on board fishing vessels in Taiwan’s Distant Water Fleet.

PRC national traffickers operating abroad also subject local populations to sex trafficking in several countries in Africa, the Mediterranean region, and South America. PRC national traffickers also subject women and girls in other Asian countries to sex trafficking and forced labor in entertainment establishments, including PRC national-owned casinos constructed in close proximity to large-scale PRC infrastructure and investment projects, and in special economic zones with limited local

government oversight. PRC national-owned factories and agricultural plantations in Burma reportedly subject local and internal migrant populations to forced labor; the same may also be true for PRC national-owned logging operations there. Congolese men and boys experience conditions indicative of forced labor in PRC national-owned mining operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

PRC national traffickers subject women and children from neighboring Asian countries, African countries, and countries in the Americas to forced labor and sex trafficking within the PRC. Traffickers promise African and South American women legitimate jobs in the PRC and force them into commercial sex upon arrival. The PRC government's birth-limitation policy and a cultural preference for sons created a skewed sex ratio of 117 boys to 100 girls in the PRC, which observers assert continues to drive the demand for commercial sex and for foreign women as brides for PRC national men—both of which may be procured by force or coercion. Traffickers kidnap or recruit women and girls through marriage brokers and transport them to the PRC, where some are subjected to sex trafficking or forced labor. Illicit brokers increasingly facilitate the forced and fraudulent marriage of South Asian, Southeast Asian, Northeast Asian, and African women and girls to PRC national men for fees of up to \$30,000. The men—sometimes in partnership with their parents—often incur large debts to cover these fees, which they attempt to recover by subjecting the “brides” to forced labor or sex trafficking. Some PRC national men reportedly circumvent this brokerage system by traveling to Southeast Asian capitals and entering into legal marriages with local women and girls, then return to the PRC and compel them into commercial sex. There are also reports of PRC national men and their parents deceiving Southeast Asian women and girls into fraudulent marriages in China, then confining them in forced concubinage involving rape leading to forced pregnancy. In cases where this forced pregnancy leads to childbirth, the men and their parents sometimes use the children as collateral to retain the women's forced labor or sexual slavery, or use the women's immigration status as coercion to dissuade them from reporting their abuses to the authorities. A small number of PRC national women are reportedly subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor via forced or fraudulent marriages to Taiwan men. Mongolian boys are at high risk of forced labor and sex trafficking under visa regimes that enable them to work indefinitely as herders, horse jockeys and circus performers across the PRC border, provided they return with a chaperone once a month. African residents of the PRC displaced through discriminatory eviction policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic may be at higher risk of sex trafficking and forced labor due to ensuing homelessness and other economic hardships.

Many North Korean refugees and asylum-seekers living illegally in the PRC are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Traffickers lure, drug, detain, or kidnap some North Korean women upon their arrival in the PRC and compel them into commercial sex in brothels and bars, through internet sex sites, or in relation to forced marriage. Traffickers also subject these women to forced labor in agriculture, as hostesses in nightclubs and karaoke bars, in domestic service, and at factories. The PRC government reportedly did not repatriate all North Korean labor migrants pursuant to a 2017 UN Security Council resolution requiring the repatriation of all North Korean nationals earning income overseas by the end of 2019, subject to limited exceptions. According to media and NGO reports, the North Korean government subjects North Korean citizens to forced labor in China as part of its proliferation finance system, likely with the knowledge of PRC officials; this includes forced labor in hotels, restaurants, and in remote cyber operations.

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