

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	320
Land:	Marokko-Vestsahara
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Annual report on trafficking in persons – Morocco
Udgivet:	29. juli 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. oktober 2022

[Home](#) > ... > [Morocco](#)

2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Morocco

OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

IN THIS SECTION / MOROCCO (TIER 2)

Morocco (Tier 2)

The Government of Morocco 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 Morocco remained on Tier 2. These efforts included increasing trafficking prosecutions. Courts sentenced traffickers to significant prison terms. The government also continued partnering with international organizations to train government officials. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government identified the fewest number of trafficking victims since 2018 and remained without comprehensive victim identification and referral procedures, which were pending government approval for the third consecutive year. Lack of proactive screening and identification measures continued to leave populations such as migrants vulnerable to penalization for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, such as immigration violations. The government did not report referring any labor trafficking or male victims to care despite identifying 12 labor trafficking victims and 54 male victims.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ◆ Finalize, approve, and systematically implement procedures to proactively identify trafficking victims, especially among vulnerable populations such as undocumented migrants.
- ◆ Create and implement a national victim referral mechanism (NRM) and train judicial and law enforcement authorities on its application.
- ◆ Investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers using the anti-trafficking law, including forced labor cases.
- ◆ Train law enforcement and judicial officials, child labor inspectors, and healthcare personnel on awareness of the anti-trafficking law, victim identification, non-penalization of victims, and referral best practices using current mechanisms with the NGO community to increase officials' ability to identify internal trafficking cases, as well as cross-border trafficking cases, as distinct from migrant smuggling crimes.
- ◆ Provide adequate protection services for victims of all forms of trafficking, including but not limited to shelter, psycho-social services, legal aid, and repatriation assistance.
- ◆ Disaggregate law enforcement data on human trafficking and migrant smuggling crimes.
- ◆ Increase provision of specialized services for populations vulnerable to trafficking and increase financial or in-kind support to NGOs that provide these services.
- ◆ Ensure that victims are not punished for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, such as immigration and prostitution violations.
- ◆ Implement nationwide anti-trafficking awareness campaigns.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Law 27.14 criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of five to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine for offenses involving adult victims and 20 to 30 years' imprisonment and a fine for those involving child victims. These penalties were sufficiently stringent, and regarding sex trafficking, commensurate with penalties for other serious crimes, such as rape.

To adjust to the pandemic, the Moroccan court system transitioned to virtual operations for most of 2021; however, the government reported this led to significant backlogs in the judicial system and reported the number of pending cases in the court system increased 34 p in 2021 compared to 2020. The government reported the pandemic and related challenges hindered its ability to comprehensively collect and report law enforcement data on trafficking.

Despite improvements in data collection during the reporting period, authorities did not always disaggregate between human trafficking and migrant smuggling crimes; thus, the government's reporting of trafficking investigation, prosecution, and conviction data may instead include other crimes such as migrant smuggling. Cultural acceptance of trafficking and low understanding of the difference between trafficking and smuggling among law enforcement officials impeded law enforcement efforts. In 2021, the government investigated 85 new trafficking cases involving 116 sex trafficking suspects, 10 labor trafficking suspects, and 20 suspects involved in unspecified forms of trafficking, although these unspecified cases may have included smuggling cases. This was similar compared with 79 investigations in 2020. Despite reduced in-person court appearances during the pandemic and challenges adapting to digital processes and reduced staff, the government initiated the prosecution of 111 alleged traffickers, an increase compared with the prosecution of 69 alleged traffickers in 2020. Of the 111 prosecutions in 2021, 89 were for alleged sex trafficking, nine for forced labor, and 13 for unspecified forms of trafficking. The government convicted 54 traffickers during 2021, a decrease from the conviction of 69 traffickers in 2020, including 48 sex traffickers and four labor traffickers. The government reported sentencing data for the first time since 2020, and courts issued 51 sentences in 2021, which ranged between five and 20 years' imprisonment. Courts upheld 26 convictions and overturned five convictions upon appeal in 2021; such data was not available for 2020. The government did not report initiating any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in human trafficking crimes. In December 2019, a diplomat posted to the Moroccan Mission to the United Nations in New York, his ex-wife, and her brother were indicted for, among other crimes, conspiring to commit visa fraud from 2006 to 2016 to exploit foreign domestic workers from the Philippines, Morocco, and other countries. U.S. authorities arrested the former diplomat's ex-wife in March 2019; she died in 2021 prior to trial. The other two defendants remained at large. For the fourth consecutive year, the government did not report completing any action to hold the former diplomat accountable. The General Prosecutor continued to ensure there were two prosecutors specialized in handling trafficking cases in every court of appeal across the country. The government coordinated trainings, at times in cooperation with international organizations, for prosecutors, border officials, law enforcement, labor inspectors, and other officials on trafficking indicators, trafficking investigations, and related topics during the reporting period.

PROTECTION

The government maintained overall efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims. The government did not have formal comprehensive victim identification standard operating

procedures (SOPs) or a national victim referral process but continued to collaborate with an international organization to establish standard procedures and a draft NRM; the draft SOPs and NRM remained pending government approval for the third consecutive year. The government and civil society organizations reported pandemic-related mitigation measures continued to limit authorities' ability to identify trafficking victims due to movement restrictions. In addition, the government reported the change to remote court proceedings restricted the ability of the points of contact stationed at courts to refer victims to support services. In 2021, the government identified 169 trafficking victims, which was a significant decrease compared with the government's identification of 441 victims in 2020, although this number may have included victims of other crimes, including smuggling. Of the 169 victims, 116 were exploited in sex trafficking and 12 in forced labor; 115 were female, and 54 were male; 167 were Moroccan, and two were foreign nationals; 90 were adults, and 79 were children. Despite the lack of comprehensive SOPs and an NRM, the Ministry of Interior used standard procedures for the reception, orientation, and care of undocumented migrants and trafficking victims encountered during border management activities. In the absence of a formal referral mechanism, the government continued to informally refer victims to services. The government referred 20 sex trafficking victims to government shelters and provided 54 victims with services including legal aid, housing assistance, medical care, foreign residence permits, and family reunification; the government did not report whether the remaining 95 identified victims received any assistance. The government did not report how many victims, if any, it referred to services in the previous reporting period. In addition, the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, Equality, and Social Development continued implementing a December 2019 initiative to combat forced child begging; the initiative aimed to strengthen child protection systems, focus interagency field teams in different regions, and improve protection services for child forced begging victims. Between the launch of the program in December 2019 and May 2021, the program assisted 142 potential child trafficking victims and provided shelter, education, psychological support, and additional services as necessary. Through this program, the government provided mobile social assistance, including reintegration, to potential child trafficking victims living on the streets of Casablanca, Menes, and Tangier; the government reported 910 children received assistance in 2021. Each branch of the National Security Directorate maintained a support unit for women victims of violence to ensure a more victim-centered approach to sensitive cases, including cases involving female trafficking victims.

The government did not provide shelter or psycho-social services specific to the needs of victims of all forms of trafficking. However, it continued to provide services to female and victims of violence, including potential trafficking victims, at 40 reception centers staffed by

nurses and social workers at major hospitals, as well as in Ministry of Justice (MOJ) protection units in Moroccan courts. Moroccan law enforcement agencies reportedly continued to utilize focal points to work directly with these reception centers and MOJ units, and they continued to use a list of NGO service providers to whom authorities could refer trafficking victims for care. The government reported these services were available to adult male victims but acknowledged they were more difficult to access. Prosecutors in the courts of first instance and the courts of appeal—in coordination with the Ministry of Health—had the authority to order trafficking victims to be removed from exploitative situations and to place them in the care of a hospital or civil society organization. The government also reported it placed an unknown number of officials in courts throughout the country, who were responsible for identifying and referring trafficking victims to psycho-social support, medical services, and legal aid. The government, however, did not report how many—if any—victims these officials or prosecutors referred to protection services. The government continued to rely heavily on NGOs and international organizations to provide assistance to trafficking victims but did not report providing financial resources. NGO service providers noted pandemic-related lockdown measures impeded their ability to assist trafficking victims and reported trafficking victims were stranded for extended periods of time in unsanitary locations or temporary shelters. The government continued to encourage victims to cooperate in investigations against traffickers, but it did not report the number of victims who did so during the reporting period or if it took measures to protect witness confidentiality, nor did it report if victims received restitution from traffickers. The government organized the voluntary repatriation of 2,376 foreign nationals between January and November 2021 but did not report how many were trafficking victims. The government provided legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims of trafficking to countries where they might face retribution or hardship.

The Ministry Delegate in charge of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs continued to lead the government's National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum, which aimed to regularize the legal status of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, including trafficking victims. Under this strategy, foreign trafficking victims could benefit from various services, including reintegration assistance, education, vocational training, social services, and legal aid. However, the government did not report proactively identifying potential trafficking victims during these regularization efforts or how many foreign trafficking victims—if any—benefited from these services during the reporting period. Due to the lack of proactive screening and identification measures, some foreign trafficking victims remained unidentified. Furthermore, foreign trafficking victims—especially among the sub-Saharan African migrant population—remained vulnerable to penalization for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, such as immigration violations. Foreign migrants reported they feared arrest and

deportation, thereby deterring them from reporting trafficking or other types of crimes to the police.

PREVENTION

The government maintained efforts to prevent human trafficking. The national inter-ministerial anti-trafficking committee, which was led by the MOJ and included two representatives from civil society, oversaw the government's national strategy for immigration and asylum, which included efforts to manage irregular migration, combat trafficking, and organize training sessions for security services on asylum, migration, and trafficking issues. However, the government reported the anti-trafficking committee was only able to meet once in person during the reporting period due to pandemic-related mitigation measures and most coordination was done via written correspondence, which delayed the coordination process. The government also continued to implement a national anti-trafficking action plan, which included coordination across relevant ministries. The government conducted public awareness campaigns, at times in coordination with an international organization, during the reporting period. The government continued operating a digital portal to field trafficking complaints and outline resources available to trafficking victims; seven complaints received through the portal were referred to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

The government reportedly continued to implement Law No. 19.12, adopted in October 2018, which provided protections for foreign domestic workers, including requiring valid work contracts that meet national labor standards for the granting of a work visa. Law 19.12 also bans the use of intermediaries to negotiate the recruitment of domestic workers on behalf of the employer and recruitment agency to reduce vulnerability to fraudulent recruitment. The government continued to operate a hotline through the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child for the public to report abuse and crimes against children, but the government did not report if the hotline received any reports of potential child trafficking crimes. The Ministry of Labor and Professional Integration continued to conduct child labor inspections in the formal economy across the country, but the government reported it remained concerned about child labor violations in the informal sector, including potential forced child labor crimes. The government continued coordinating with an international organization to spread public awareness to prevent child labor in domestic work—a sector vulnerable to forced child labor—during the reporting period. Aside from implementing a national policy for the protection of children, including preventing exploitation of children through online sex exploitation, the government did not report efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or child sex tourism. The government provided anti-trafficking training to its diplomatic

personnel. Moroccan peacekeeping forces received anti-trafficking training and operated under a “no tolerance” standard for troops involved in UN peacekeeping missions. Although not explicitly reported as trafficking, an international organization reported receiving two allegations—one in 2021 and one in 2020—of sexual exploitation with potential trafficking indicators by Moroccan peacekeepers deployed to UN peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the government’s investigations into the allegations were pending at the end of the reporting period.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Morocco, and traffickers exploit Moroccan victims abroad. Documented and undocumented foreign migrants, especially women and children, are highly vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking in Morocco and as they transit through Morocco to reach Europe. Traffickers exploit many migrants who voluntarily use smugglers to enter Morocco. In 2020, the number of sub-Saharan migrants clandestinely entering the country—the majority of whom intend to transit Morocco on their way to Europe—decreased by an estimated 30 percent in comparison to 2019; this trend reportedly continued in 2021, but data was unavailable.

However, the number of migrants departing from Morocco for Europe reportedly increased eight-fold due to migrants making the dangerous ocean crossing to the Canary Islands in 2020, compared to 2019. The Spanish government and international organizations estimate that 38,000 people, including Moroccan citizens, crossed clandestinely from Morocco to Spanish territory in 2020 either by sea or over land; the majority, approximately 21,000, arrived in the Canary Islands. Both sub-Saharan and Moroccan migrants making this journey to Spain and further into Europe are at risk of trafficking in Morocco and Europe. For example, traffickers exploit some female migrants while seeking assistance at “safe houses” in Morocco, which usually are run by individuals of their own nationality. Some female undocumented migrants, primarily from Sub-Saharan Africa and a small but growing number from South Asia, are exploited in sex trafficking and forced labor in Morocco. Criminal networks operating in Oujda on the Algerian border and in northern coastal cities, such as Nador, exploit undocumented migrant women in sex trafficking and forced begging; networks in Oujda also reportedly exploit children of migrants in forced begging. Some female migrants, particularly Nigerians, who transit Oujda are exploited in sex trafficking once they reach Europe.

Furthermore, some contacts claim that entrenched Nigerian networks, working with Moroccan criminal elements, exploit primarily Nigerian women in sex trafficking and maintain control over these victims when they arrive in Europe. International organizations, local NGOs, and migrants report women and unaccompanied children from Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Cameroon are highly vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor in Morocco. Some reports suggest Cameroonian and Nigerian networks exploit women in sex trafficking, while Nigerian networks also exploit women in forced begging in the streets by threatening the victims and their families; the victims are typically the same nationality as the traffickers. Some women from the Philippines, Indonesia, and francophone sub-Saharan Africa are recruited for employment as domestic workers in Morocco; upon arrival, employers force them into domestic service through non-payment of wages, withholding of passports, and physical abuse.

Traffickers, including parents and other intermediaries, exploit Moroccan children in Morocco for forced labor, domestic work, begging, and sex trafficking. Some Moroccan boys endure forced labor while employed as apprentices in the artisanal, textile, and construction industries and in mechanic shops. Although the incidence of child domestic workers has reportedly decreased in Morocco since 2005, girls are recruited from rural areas for work in domestic service in cities, and some become victims of forced labor. NGOs and other observers anecdotally reported in 2018 that a significant number of girls work as domestic help in Moroccan households, but it is difficult to determine the extent of the problem because of authorities' inability to access this population. Drug traffickers reportedly compel children to participate in drug production and trafficking in Morocco. Some family members and other intermediaries exploit Moroccan women in sex trafficking. Some foreign nationals, primarily from Europe and the Middle East, engage in child sex tourism in major Moroccan cities; these cases reportedly decreased during 2020 due to pandemic-related travel restrictions. Traffickers exploit Moroccan adults and children in forced labor and sex trafficking, primarily in Europe and the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf states. Traffickers force Moroccan women into commercial sex abroad, where they experience restrictions on movement, threats, and emotional and physical abuse. As in past years, media continued reporting Moroccan workers in Spain's agricultural sector were subjected to forced labor and, at times, sexual abuse. Swedish authorities reported that, since 2016, traffickers force boys and young men from Morocco experiencing homelessness to deal drugs, carry out thefts, and perpetrate other criminal activities in Sweden; however, these cases have reportedly decreased since 2019.

TAGS

Related Articles

— JULY 19, 2022

2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Yemen

[READ MORE](#)

— JULY 19, 2022

2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: United Arab Emirates

[READ MORE](#)

— JULY 19, 2022

2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Tunisia

[READ MORE](#)

White House
USA.gov
Office of the Inspector General
Archives
Contact Us



[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

[Copyright Information](#)

[FOIA](#)

[No FEAR Act](#)