



2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Morocco

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 27 June 2017

Cite as United States Department of State, *2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Morocco*, 27 June 2017, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5959ec853.html> [accessed 4 October 2017]

This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

MOROCCO: TIER 2

The Government of Morocco does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore, Morocco remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by enacting a new anti-trafficking law prohibiting all forms of trafficking and establishing an inter-ministerial anti-trafficking commission. It also worked to reduce vulnerability to trafficking by enacting a new law limiting child domestic work and by extending legal protections and social services to irregular migrants. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government reported limited efforts to investigate and prosecute potential trafficking crimes, and it did not report screening for or proactively identifying trafficking victims, especially among irregular migrants, who remained highly vulnerable to trafficking in Morocco. As a result, unidentified victims among vulnerable populations remained at risk of penalization and re-trafficking. The government also did not provide specialized protection services specifically catered to the needs of trafficking victims.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOROCCO

Implement the 2016 anti-trafficking law and train judicial and law enforcement authorities on its application; significantly increase investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers, and impose sufficiently stringent sentences; develop procedures for officials to proactively identify trafficking victims, especially among irregular migrants; ensure victims are not punished for crimes committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking, such as immigration and prostitution violations; provide adequate protection services for trafficking victims via funding or in-kind support to NGOs that provide specialized services for victims of all forms of trafficking; develop and implement formal procedures for victim identification and referral to care using a victim-centered approach; significantly improve law enforcement data collection and reporting, including the disaggregation of data between human trafficking and human smuggling crimes; and enhance public awareness campaigns addressing all forms of trafficking of men, women, and children.

PROSECUTION

The government improved its law enforcement capacity by enacting an anti-trafficking law, but it made limited efforts to investigate and prosecute potential trafficking crimes. The government enacted anti-trafficking law 27.14 in September 2016, which prohibits all forms of trafficking. The law prescribes penalties of five to 30 years imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent, consistent with the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, and commensurate with other serious crimes, such as rape. Several pre-existing laws used during the reporting period prohibited some, but not all, forms of trafficking. Generally, penalties under these laws were not sufficiently stringent. Morocco's penal code prohibits forced child labor through article 467-2, which prescribes penalties of one to three years imprisonment, which are not sufficiently stringent. The penal code also prohibits "forced prostitution" and "child prostitution" through articles 497-499, which prescribe penalties of up to 10 years or life imprisonment for crimes found to have occurred with aggravated circumstances; these penalties are

sufficiently stringent and commensurate with other serious crimes such as rape. The penal code does not specifically define and penalize sex trafficking. Article 10 of Morocco's labor code prohibits forced labor of a worker; this offense is punishable by a fine for the first offense and a jail term of up to three months for subsequent offenses; these penalties are not sufficiently stringent.

The government did not make arrest or prosecution data public. Some media outlets and diplomatic missions reported that the government maintained close cooperation with Spain to arrest, prosecute, and convict international human traffickers. In February 2017, the Moroccan government cooperated with the Spanish government in the arrest of a 10-member human trafficking ring moving trafficking victims between Morocco and Spain. The government also reported cooperating with the governments of the Netherlands and Turkey on international trafficking cases during the reporting period. In 2016, the government reported two convictions of forced child begging in which the two perpetrators each received sentences of one-month probation, which advocates consider inadequate to deter the commission of these serious crimes. The government also reported disbanding 33 human smuggling and trafficking networks in 2016, but it did not report prosecuting the perpetrators operating these networks for alleged trafficking crimes. The government initiated separate investigations of and arrested three Saudi Arabian nationals and one American on charges of child sex trafficking and child sex tourism. In 2016, the government continued to investigate seven Moroccan peacekeepers accused of sexual exploitation in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as reported by an international organization. At the end of this reporting period, the international organization reported three of these investigations remained pending, two were found unsubstantiated, and two were found substantiated. In the two substantiated cases, the government reportedly handed down a prison sentence to one former peacekeeper and the other was repatriated with further updates pending. In 2016, the government held three roundtable discussions for officials on victim identification, referral, and protection, which aimed to strengthen the capacity and coordination of anti-trafficking personnel in seven departments throughout the country. Additionally, authorities from various ministries, including the police, met regularly to coordinate various anti-trafficking efforts. The Ministry of Justice organized regular training programs on human trafficking for judges and other judicial officials in 2016. After the government enacted the 2016 anti-trafficking law, an international organization with in-kind assistance from the government trained a group of judges on its provisions and implementation.

PROTECTION

The government sustained minimal efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims. As in past years, the government did not report proactive efforts to identify trafficking victims, including within vulnerable populations such as irregular migrants. International organizations and NGOs reported some local law enforcement officials informally referred cases of vulnerable women, children, and migrants, including potential trafficking victims, to them for social services. Although the government drastically decreased forced deportations of migrants over the last couple of years, it continued to regularly conduct forced internal relocations of irregular migrants, particularly in Nador. The government did not make efforts to identify potential trafficking victims among the vulnerable irregular migrant population, and therefore some unidentified victims may have been penalized for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, such as immigration and prostitution violations. While the government continued efforts to regularize various types of irregular migrants, it did not make efforts to identify potential trafficking victims among those whose stay was regularized through this program.

The government did not provide protection services designed or funded specifically to assist trafficking victims. Civil society organizations and some foreign embassies continued to be the primary providers of protection services for trafficking victims, and the government did provide limited funding or in-kind support. Additionally, some police officials reportedly helped foreign embassies recover migrants' passports confiscated by their employers. The government continued to provide a wide variety of legal protections and social and health services to vulnerable women and children, including victims of crime and abuse, some of whom may have been unidentified trafficking victims. In 2016, the Ministry in Charge of Residents Abroad and Migration Affairs (MCRAMA) offered financial assistance to 231 projects dedicated to providing integration programs including social, medical, and legal services to vulnerable migrants, refugees, and trafficking victims, but it did not report how many trafficking victims received this assistance during the reporting period. By the end of this reporting period, MCRAMA expanded this civil society partnership program to 124 organizations in ten different regions throughout Morocco. MCRAMA had a plan of action to protect Moroccan migrants abroad; it did not provide specialized care during the reporting period for

repatriated Moroccans exploited abroad. The government reportedly encouraged victims to cooperate in investigations against their traffickers, yet the government did not report that any victims testified in 2016. Decree No. 1-11-164 and the anti-trafficking law 27.14 provide some protections to victims and witnesses who testify against traffickers. The government provided legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims of trafficking to countries where they might face retribution or hardship.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent human trafficking. The new anti-trafficking law stipulates the formation of a national inter-ministerial anti-trafficking commission to coordinate efforts to combat and prevent trafficking. In 2016, the government drafted guidelines and responsibilities for the new commission, but did not finalize them by the end of the reporting period or establish the committee. In August 2016, the government enacted a law that prohibits the employment of domestic workers under the age of 16 and strictly limits the employment of children between the ages of 16 and 18 for domestic work; to give employers time to comply, the law was not implemented during the reporting period but is scheduled to enter into force in August 2017. In December 2016, the government announced and adopted a plan to implement the second phase of its 2014 migrant regularization campaign, which granted legal status to various types of irregular migrants and allowed them access to jobs, employment services, education, legal protections, and some social services; as of March 2017, more than 18,000 migrants had already applied for regularization. The government continued to take some measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and child sex tourism. In November 2016, in partnership with an international organization, the government developed a program to raise awareness about child exploitation on the internet. In addition, the government made efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor. In 2016, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs conducted 543 child labor inspections, resulting in 79 formal notices addressed to unlawful employers. Labor inspectors also withdrew 80 children under the age of 15 from work sites and 166 children between the ages of 15 and 18 from hazardous work sites. The government did not report if it imposed any financial penalties on these employers, nor if inspectors identified any trafficking victims among these children. As in previous years, inspectors continued to be hindered by inadequate staffing and did not have the legal authority to enter homes, preventing them from identifying children or adults in domestic servitude. The government provided its diplomatic personnel human rights training, which included background on human trafficking issues. Moroccan peacekeeping forces continued to operate under a "no tolerance" policy, and the government provided training on the issue of sexual exploitation, but not specifically human trafficking, to Moroccan soldiers prior to their deployment abroad on UN peacekeeping missions.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Morocco is a source, destination, and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. According to a November 2015 study conducted by the Moroccan government, with support by an international organization, children are exploited in Morocco for labor, domestic work, begging, and sex trafficking. Although the incidence of child domestic work has reportedly decreased since 2005, girls are recruited from rural areas for work in domestic service in cities and become victims of forced labor. Some Moroccan boys endure forced labor while employed as apprentices in the artisanal and construction industries and in mechanic shops. The 2015 study also found that some women are forced into prostitution in Morocco by members of their families or other intermediaries. Some female undocumented migrants, primarily from sub-Saharan Africa and a small but growing number from South Asia, are coerced into prostitution and forced labor. Criminal networks operating in Oujda on the Algerian border and in the northern coastal town of Nador force undocumented migrant women into prostitution and begging; networks in Oujda also reportedly force children of migrants to beg. Some female migrants, particularly Nigerians, who transit Oujda are forced into prostitution once they reach Europe. International organizations, local NGOs, and migrants report unaccompanied children and women from Cote d'Ivoire, 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 force women into prostitution, while Nigerian networks also force women to beg 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 and Indonesia are recruited for employment as domestic workers in Morocco; upon arrival, some are subjected to forced labor, experiencing non-payment of wages, withholding of passports, and physical abuse at the hands of their employers.

Moroccan men, women, and children are exploited in forced labor and sex trafficking, primarily in Europe and the Middle East. Moroccan women forced into prostitution abroad experience restrictions on movement, threats, and emotional and physical abuse. Some foreigners, primarily from Europe and the Middle East, engage in child sex tourism in major Moroccan cities.

Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [Morocco](#)

Topics

- [Child labour](#)
- [Child prostitution](#)
- [Forced labour](#)
- [Migrants](#)
- [Smuggling of persons](#)
- [Trafficking in persons](#)