



# 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report

## OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

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## Understanding Human Trafficking

“Trafficking in persons” and “human trafficking” are umbrella terms—often used interchangeably—to refer to a crime whereby traffickers exploit and profit at the expense of adults or children by compelling them to perform labor or engage in commercial sex. When a person younger than 18 is used to perform a commercial sex act, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion involved.

The United States recognizes two primary forms of trafficking in persons: sex trafficking and forced labor. The basic meaning of these forms of human trafficking and some unique characteristics of each are set forth below, followed by several key principles and concepts that relate to all forms of human trafficking.

The U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

More than 180 nations have ratified or acceded to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (the UN TIP Protocol), which defines trafficking in persons and contains obligations to prevent and combat the crime.

The TVPA and the UN TIP Protocol contain similar definitions of human trafficking. The elements of both definitions can be described using a three-element framework focused on the trafficker’s 1) acts; 2) means; and 3) purpose:

The “**acts**” element focuses on a trafficker recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining another person for labor, service, or commercial sex. The “acts” element for sex trafficking is also often met when the trafficker patronizes or solicits another person for commercial sex.

The “**means**” element focuses on a trafficker’s use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel the other person to engage in labor, services, or commercial sex.

The “**purpose**” element focuses on the perpetrator’s goal to exploit a person for labor, services, or commercial sex act.

**A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.**

## Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking encompasses the range of activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child to engage in a commercial sex act.

Coercion in the case of sex trafficking includes a broad array of means, including threats of serious harm, psychological harm, reputational harm, threats to others, and debt manipulation.

Sex trafficking can take place in private homes, massage parlors, hotels, or brothels, among other locations, as well as on the internet.

## Child Sex Trafficking

In cases where an individual engages in any of the specified “acts” with a child (younger than 18), the means element is irrelevant regardless of whether evidence of force, fraud, or coercion exists. The use of children in commercial sex acts is prohibited by law in the United States and most countries around the world.

## Forced Labor

Forced Labor, sometimes also referred to as labor trafficking, encompasses the range of activities involved when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person.

Traffickers’ coercive schemes can include threats of force, debt manipulation, withholding of pay, confiscation of identity documents, psychological coercion, reputational harm, manipulation of the use of addictive substances, threats to other people, or other forms of coercion.

There is no limit on the location or type of industry. Forced labor can occur in any sector or setting, whether legal or illicit, including but not limited to agricultural fields, factories, restaurants, hotels, massage parlors, retail stores, fishing vessels, mines, private homes, or drug trafficking operations.

There are certain types of forced labor that are frequently distinguished for emphasis or because they are widespread:

## Domestic Servitude

“Domestic servitude” is a form of forced labor in which the trafficker requires a victim to perform work in a private residence. Such circumstances create unique vulnerabilities.

Domestic workers are often isolated and may work alone in a house. Their employer often controls their access to food, transportation, and housing. What happens in a private residence is hidden from the world – including from law enforcement and labor inspectors – resulting in barriers to victim identification. Foreign domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to language and cultural barriers, as well as a lack of community ties. Some perpetrators use these types of conditions as part of their coercive schemes to compel the labor of domestic workers with little risk of detection.

## Forced Child Labor

The term “forced child labor” describes forced labor schemes in which traffickers compel children to work. Traffickers often target children because they are more vulnerable. Although some children may legally engage in certain forms of work, forcing or coercing children to work remains illegal under many countries’ laws. Forms of slavery or slavery-like practices – including the sale of children, forced or compulsory child labor, and debt bondage and serfdom of children – continue to exist, despite legal prohibitions and widespread condemnation. Some indicators of forced labor of a child include situations in which the child appears to be in the custody of a non-family member and the child’s work financially benefits someone outside the child’s family or the denial of food, rest, or schooling to a child who is working.

## Key Principles and Concepts

These key principles and concepts relate to all forms of trafficking in persons, including forced labor and sex trafficking.

### Consent

Human trafficking can take place even if the victim initially consented to providing labor, services, or commercial sex acts. A trafficker can target a victim after a victim seeks or applies for a job. Even if the victim offered themselves voluntarily to perform work or services, if the work or services is no longer voluntary, the labor is forced. Likewise, in a sex trafficking case, an adult victim’s initial willingness to engage in commercial sex acts is not relevant where a perpetrator subsequently uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim and cause them to continue engaging in the same acts. In the case of child sex trafficking, the consent of the victim is never relevant as a child cannot legally consent to commercial sex acts.

## Movement

Neither U.S. law nor international law requires that a trafficker or victim move across a border for a human trafficking offense to take place. Trafficking in persons is a crime of exploitation and coercion, and not movement. Traffickers can use schemes that take victims hundreds of miles away from their homes or exploit them in the same neighborhoods where they were born.

## Debt Bondage

“Debt bondage” is focused on human trafficking crimes in which the trafficker’s primary means of coercion is debt manipulation. U.S. law prohibits perpetrators from using debts as part of their scheme, plan, or pattern to compel a person to work or engage in commercial sex. Traffickers target some individuals with an initial debt assumed willingly as a condition of future employment, while in certain countries traffickers tell individuals they “inherited” the debt from relatives. Traffickers can also manipulate debts after the economic relationship begins by withholding earnings or forcing the victim to assume debts for expenses like food, housing, or transportation. They can also manipulate debts a victim owes to other people. When traffickers use debts as a means to compel labor or commercial sex, they often have committed a crime under the laws of the country where the conduct occurred.

## The Non-Punishment Principle

A victim-centered and trauma-informed approach is key to successful anti-trafficking efforts. A central tenet of such an approach is that victims of trafficking should not be inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts they committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Effective implementation of the “non-punishment principle,” as it is increasingly referred to, requires not only recognizing and embracing the principle in regional and national laws but also increasing proactive victim identification.

## State-Sponsored Human Trafficking

While the TVPA and UN TIP Protocol call on governments to proactively address trafficking crimes, some governments are part of the problem, directly compelling their citizens into sexual slavery or forced labor schemes. From forced labor in economically important sectors, as part of government-funded projects or missions abroad, or as a method of punishment or

discrimination, officials use their power to exploit their people. To extract this work, governments coerce by threatening the withdrawal of public benefits, withholding salaries, failing to adhere to limits on national service, manipulating the lack of legal status of stateless individuals and members of minority groups, threatening to punish family members, or conditioning services or freedom of movement on labor or sex. In 2019, Congress amended the TVPA to acknowledge that governments can also act as traffickers, referring specifically to a “government policy or pattern” of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers.

## Unlawful Recruitment or Use of Child Soldiers

Another manifestation of human trafficking occurs when government forces or any non-state armed group unlawfully recruits or uses children – through force, fraud, or coercion – as soldiers or for labor or services in conflict situations. Children are also used as sex slaves. Sexual slavery, as referred to here, may occur when children are forced or coerced to “marry” or are raped by commanders or combatants. Both male and female children are often sexually abused or exploited by members of armed groups and suffer the same types of devastating physical and psychological consequences associated with sex trafficking.

## Accountability in the Private Economy

Forced labor is well documented in the private economy, particularly in agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, construction, and domestic work, but no sector is immune. Sex trafficking occurs in several industries as well. Forced labor is most well-known in the hospitality industry, but it also occurs in connection with extractive industries where activities are often remote and lack meaningful government presence. Governments should hold all entities, including businesses, accountable for human trafficking. In some countries, the law provides for corporate accountability in both the civil and criminal justice systems. U.S. law provides for criminal culpability for any legal person, including business entities, for certain conduct related to human trafficking, and a civil cause of action for victims of such conduct.

## Terminology

As noted in the 2021 report of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (the Council), there are myriad terms survivors use to identify themselves. While some individuals who have

experienced trafficking choose to embrace the title “survivor,” others do not. Terminology regarding human trafficking varies based on a country’s respective laws and language(s). The word “survivor” is not generally defined by law, nor is it universally used or accepted in the context of human trafficking.

Within the United States, there are some widely used terms for individuals who have experienced human trafficking and subsequently decided to engage in anti-trafficking related work on a professional level. Individuals may prefer to be referred to as “survivor leaders,” “survivor advocates,” or “subject matter experts with lived experience of human trafficking.”

Other important terms used in this introduction and in country narratives within this report include:

**Victim:** In the United States, the term “victim” means a person who has suffered direct physical, emotional, or pecuniary harm as a result of the commission of a crime. As in the United States, in some other countries “victims” are expressly afforded certain rights and services to assist during and in the aftermath of the commission of that crime. For these reasons, country narratives within this report still make extensive use of this term. Adopting survivor and trauma-informed approaches should not conflict or compete with the provision of assistance entitled to victims.

**Victim-centered approach:** Stakeholders place the crime victim’s priorities, needs, and interests at the center of their work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance, with an emphasis on self-determination, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring restoration of victims’ feelings of safety and security are a priority; and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize victims. A victim-centered approach should also incorporate a trauma-informed, survivor-informed, and culturally competent approach.

**Survivor-informed approach:** A program, policy, intervention, or product that is designed, implemented, and evaluated with intentional leadership, expertise, and input from a diverse community of survivors to ensure that the program, policy, intervention, or product accurately represents their needs, interests, and perceptions.

**Trauma-informed approach:** A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in individuals and the professionals who help them and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings and by seeking to actively resist re-traumatization. This approach includes an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and

physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach places priority on restoring the survivor's feelings of safety, choice, and control. Programs, services, agencies, and communities can be trauma-informed.

**Culturally competent approach:** Cultural and linguistic competence enables effective work in cross-cultural situations, by having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.

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## Looking Forward After 25 Years

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), passed in October 2000, was a landmark piece of legislation representing the culmination of years of persistent advocacy and collaboration among anti-trafficking advocates, survivor leaders, and Congressional champions. This groundbreaking, bipartisan legislation established the framework for combating human trafficking and set new global standards for how governments can work together to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent the crime. Governments around the world came together the following month to adopt the UN TIP Protocol. This marked the start of a global anti-trafficking movement that has grown in both influence and determination over the past 25 years.

## A Brief Look Back

The TVPA, the UN TIP Protocol, and the national and international anti-trafficking networks they engendered have had a remarkable impact in the fight against human trafficking since 2000. In the United States, the TVPA authorized the creation of the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (PITF) to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts across the U.S. federal government. It also established the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State to work with governments around the world to combat this crime and to produce the annual Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report). Further legislative efforts led to the creation of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, a body composed of trafficking survivors that advises and makes recommendations on federal anti-trafficking policies to the PITF.

The annual TIP Report, meanwhile, grew into a touchstone assessment of government anti-trafficking efforts in 188 countries and territories, including the United States, covering efforts



across the “3Ps” of prosecution, protection, and prevention. The Report’s targeted recommendations have provided a tool for governments to focus their anti-trafficking efforts and resources, and the analysis of thematic issues and trends is a go-to resource for service providers and policymakers.

Global understanding of human trafficking and the ways people are vulnerable to exploitation has evolved significantly over the last 25 years, thanks to the efforts of survivor leaders, civil society, international organizations, the private sector, and front-line workers. Most national and international laws, for example, now recognize that human trafficking does not require movement; human trafficking occurs as much within countries as between them. As this understanding has developed, the anti-trafficking movement has celebrated historic achievements that have strengthened governments and communities, protected lives and livelihoods, and held traffickers accountable.

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### **Anti-Trafficking Impact by the Numbers**

183 State parties to the UN TIP Protocol

138 countries and territories with comprehensive anti-trafficking laws

155 countries and territories with national anti-trafficking coordinating bodies

Six countries and multilateral organizations with survivor advisory councils

2024: TIP Report records highest ever reported numbers of total victims identified and labor trafficking victims identified by countries around the world

2025: TIP Report records highest ever convictions for labor trafficking by countries around the world

2024: First use of Global Magnitsky sanctions for forced labor in online scams

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## **An Evolving Response to Addressing Core Challenges**

Trafficking in persons – including forced labor and sex trafficking – is often a hidden crime, operating largely out of public view. Traffickers may mask their activities, complicating criminal investigations, and although many victims interact with people in their community, such as medical professionals and law enforcement, they may not self-identify as trafficking victims for many reasons, including fear of physical harm or other retribution. As trafficking has evolved, so too has the approach of many governments as they work to address

fundamental anti-trafficking challenges and develop new methods to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent the crime.

Under the UN TIP Protocol, governments have a responsibility to criminalize all forms of human trafficking and hold perpetrators accountable. Many governments have taken up this responsibility by building a comprehensive legal framework and the capacity to investigate and prosecute suspected traffickers, including in cases involving government corruption or official complicity. As this capacity has increased over the past 25 years, so has the understanding that holding traffickers accountable for their crimes helps to deter potential perpetrators and protect victims.

Governments have also increasingly recognized the need to identify victims through proactive screening, including of vulnerable populations, and to provide support services. Even today, many governments struggle to implement effective screening and victim referral mechanisms. Many front-line professionals who interact with potential victims lack training on trafficking indicators and how to respond. Victims, meanwhile, are frequently reluctant to disclose their experiences, fearing retaliation or, in some cases, being inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Once victims are identified, most governments face additional challenges in ensuring they receive comprehensive and tailored support. Coordination across national and local state agencies and with civil society organizations can help governments maximize limited resources and implement effective victim referral processes.

Many governments have also recognized the importance of a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach. Responses to the trauma that survivors experience have evolved significantly over the last 25 years as the anti-trafficking community has improved its ability to recognize trauma and its impact and to avoid re-traumatization of survivors. Effective victim-centered and trauma-informed practices also help law enforcement build trust and ultimately stronger cases against traffickers, helping potentially uncover broader criminal networks that threaten safety and security.

While understanding of human trafficking has grown, more work is needed to address the general lack of knowledge about the crime and lingering misconceptions about what trafficking is and is not. Many people do not realize that human trafficking can happen in their hometown, and they may conflate human trafficking with crimes such as migrant smuggling or other exploitative practices. Governments often seek to confront these information gaps through awareness-raising campaigns, but a robust prevention strategy must extend beyond public outreach. As understanding of the crime and the ways traffickers operate has grown,

governments need a nuanced approach to trafficking prevention. Over the years, the anti-trafficking community has expanded its collective toolbox to include measures to reduce risk and protect vulnerable populations, research to guide targeted anti-trafficking programs, and partnerships between governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to share knowledge and coordinate resources. Some governments have built on this progress further, creating formal multilateral partnerships like Alliance 8.7, as well as informal mechanisms such as the Principles to Guide Government Action to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains.

Over the past 25 years, governments have also learned the importance of addressing human trafficking crimes that take place within their own borders. According to a 2024 UNODC report, 58 percent of identified trafficking victims in 2022 were exploited in their own country, rather than abroad. As governments have expanded their focus beyond transnational human trafficking networks to also address trafficking crimes occurring solely within their jurisdiction, this has meant challenging common misconceptions, including that it is something happening in other places but not “here.” Only once governments have defined the problem can they design criminal justice, service provision, and prevention responses that deter traffickers and deliver justice and care to victims.

## Addressing Official Complicity in Trafficking Crimes, including State-Sponsored Forced Labor

In adopting the UN TIP Protocol, the international community recognized that trafficking in persons must be eliminated in all its forms. One of the foundational steps countries must take is ensuring they are not officially complicit in, engaging in, or condoning trafficking in persons directly. Official complicity covers a spectrum, ranging from failure to conduct sufficient oversight to official state-sponsored human trafficking programs.

A number of countries have increased accountability for official complicity by government actors in human trafficking. For example, in 2022, a court in Uzbekistan sentenced the director of a state-run orphanage for his role in exploiting girls living there in sex trafficking, alongside two high ranking regional officials; however, the penalty applied was lower than what the criminal code prescribed. In December 2024, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned two former Government of Uzbekistan officials and the former orphanage director under the Global Magnitsky Act for serious human rights abuse related to this conduct.

While many countries have taken steps to prevent official complicity in human trafficking, a number of malign governments have done exactly the opposite, engaging in state-sanctioned forced labor in violation of international standards and fundamental principles of human rights.

**Government officials financially benefit from human trafficking.** In Cambodia, senior officials owned properties used by online scam operators to exploit victims in forced labor and forced criminality.

**A number of countries still compel labor as a form of punishing political opposition.** In the DPRK, an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 persons are held in prison camps and an undetermined number of persons in other forms of detention facilities, including “re-education through labor” camps. Russian-led forces also unlawfully conscript or force many Ukrainians in Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine, including those in detention, to fight against their own country or engage in other labor, such as to clear rubble and dispose of corpses.

**Some countries exploit their own citizens in forced labor.** The Cuban regime, which generated \$4.9 billion in revenue from the export of medical services in 2022 (the last year for which data is available), has long employed a policy or pattern of state-sponsored human trafficking in its medical missions, including through coercive recruitment and employment practices and abuse of legal processes. In China, the Chinese Communist Party is exploiting Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang through a government policy or pattern of widespread forced labor, including through mass arbitrary detentions.

Like human trafficking in general, official complicity has become more “invisible” as governments attempt to reframe it as something else. For example, governments have shifted from imposing detention center labor to creating so-called economic development or communal service opportunities and then requiring workers to participate in them. China has developed “poverty alleviation” programs in the Xinjiang region in an attempt to compel the labor of Uyghurs and other persecuted groups.

These governments and their officials have reaped substantial financial benefits by subjecting others to forced labor, which harms not only victims but other countries and their citizens. Online scam operations, for example, have defrauded innocent people around the world of tens of billions of dollars, including in the United States.

Governments should lead by example in eradicating human trafficking from their own practices in the following ways:

**Pass legislation to prohibit and punish official complicity and adopt internal policies and procedures to guard against complicity.** All countries can enact legislation ensuring their governments are assessing their procurement practices at regular intervals. They can also strengthen their law enforcement capabilities to address official complicity.

**Enhance international cooperation.** Many countries already engage in programs to ensure the government does not purchase products made with forced labor. Countries can share these lists and practices with each other to avoid transshipment, increase awareness of products made with forced labor, and coordinate sanctions or other actions against countries that engage in state-sponsored forced labor.

**Train officials and prevent human trafficking from occurring.** Ensure all personnel recognize indicators for human trafficking and the relevant prohibitions and know how and where to report potential trafficking.

## Promising Practices for Responding to Survivors of Human Trafficking in the Healthcare Setting

Healthcare workers are often the first professionals to come into contact with people who experience violence, including human trafficking. Research suggests as many as 90 percent of human trafficking survivors attend healthcare settings during and after trafficking experiences, but they often remain unidentified or do not receive specialized assistance to which they are entitled. A study surveying 6,303 healthcare workers in the United States revealed only 42 percent received formal training on human trafficking, while 93 percent believed they would benefit from this education. To better equip healthcare systems to identify and respond to human trafficking, healthcare workers should receive education on various types of violence, including human trafficking, both in medical and nursing schools and as part of mandatory continuing education programs. Institutions can also comprehensively integrate trauma awareness into their operations, recognizing how trauma impacts patients and staff while aiming to mitigate re-traumatization.

Patients may experience more than one type of violence concurrently. Often, the resulting health consequences are similar. Human trafficking response efforts do not necessarily require separate programs, policies, or procedures from other forms of violence.

The healthcare field can consider the following recommendations:

## **Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment via Effective Support Systems**

Prioritize patient safety by connecting them with safe housing, case management services, and law enforcement (if desired), addressing immediate safety risks and service needs and asking if they have family or friends who are safe to contact.

Provide training to staff on trauma-informed approaches, as well as support for staff experiencing vicarious trauma.

Prepare for barriers that can prevent patients from disclosing, including fear of law enforcement involvement, further violence, and retaliation.

Maintain a nonjudgmental approach, recognizing the trauma survivors have endured and the judgment they may experience from others.

Join local, state, and national task forces and build community support, including local NGOs.

## **Communication and Cultural Sensitivity**

Provide accessible, culturally sensitive care by offering in-person interpretation services and honoring preferences for same-sex healthcare workers when possible, while building patient trust through clear communication, confidentiality assurances, and warm referrals to appropriate services.

## **Patient Autonomy and Informed Care**

Institutionalize evidence-based models for trauma-informed screening.

Use universal education, which provides all patients with information on the health impacts of human trafficking.

Evaluate success beyond patient disclosure by providing patients with knowledge about relevant types of violence, their legal rights, and available resources, while respecting patient agency and adapting approaches for vulnerable populations.

Encourage patients to direct their own care by explaining medical conditions in plain language, confirming understanding, respecting their informed decisions, and ensuring

they know they can return for care even if refusing treatment or leaving against medical advice.

## Identification and Referral: Streamlining Victim Services

At the center of all forms of human trafficking are victims – individuals who suffered physical, sexual, psychological, or financial harm because of a trafficker's actions. Effective protection measures meet the individual needs of trafficking victims and help prevent re-victimization by offering secure housing, legal support, and connections to social services that reduce vulnerability. However, many governments remain without efficient and effective processes to identify victims and refer them to care, while some with such systems lack the capacity or resources to effectively implement identification procedures and consistently deliver victim services.

## Coordinated Approaches to Victim Protection

Governments across the world employ different approaches to build, capacitate, and regularize victim identification and referral. Victims of trafficking need a variety of services, which often come from different agencies (law enforcement, healthcare, social services, legal aid, etc.) in partnership with civil society. Establishing collaborative networks that facilitate these agencies working together can help streamline protection efforts. One approach many governments use to refer individuals to services is known as a national referral mechanism (NRM) – a formal framework to complement victim identification procedures and further systematize the identification of trafficking victims to ensure their referral and access to services. NRMs should foster intragovernmental coordination (including referrals to law enforcement when appropriate); formalize each government entity's responsibility; and enable collaboration and partnerships with civil society to ensure victim protection and care.

## Continued Challenges

NRMs and other types of identification and referral systems generally succeed when they assess someone as a trafficking victim, triage their needs, and facilitate immediate access to care. However, these systems can become a barrier when they require a “competent authority” to provide official victim status and that “competent authority” lacks technical

knowledge on human trafficking or a particular form of trafficking and/or sufficient capacity, including resources and staff. Such gaps likely limit victims from being officially identified as trafficking victims or result in delays in such designations, which impedes or delays access to care. In many countries, formal identification rests entirely with law enforcement. This may result in an assessment based on the evidence of a strong trafficking case (i.e., how it would hold up in court) rather than of the individual's need for further services. Furthermore, having law enforcement be the only entity able to officially identify victims may disincentivize victims who do not wish to engage with law enforcement from coming forward, which may limit their access to services. Instead of placing the emphasis on building a case against traffickers, the highest priority during victim identification should be the protection of victims.

## Recommendations for Government

Ensure identification and referral procedures, including NRMs, are multi-disciplinary, involving government and civil society.

Grant all trafficking victims, without exception, immediate access to protection services, social benefits, and individualized support.

Create a pathway for referral to services focused on protection rather than criminal justice and offer non-conditional support to trafficking victims who do not wish to cooperate with law enforcement.

Divorce considerations about the strength of a legal case against suspected perpetrators from provision of services.

Develop a clear pathway for victim identification and referral, including by establishing specialized law enforcement units, providing anti-trafficking training, and funding and empowering NGOs to identify victims and provide specialized assistance.

## A Way Forward

Despite progress made over two decades, governments continue to struggle to identify most trafficking victims, and victims too often face barriers in receiving services. Streamlining services for human trafficking victims involves creating a coordinated, trauma-informed, and victim-centered system that prioritizes their safety, healing, and long-term well-being.

## Forced Criminality: Involuntary Crimes



Forced criminality is a form of trafficking in persons that occurs when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in criminal conduct for the benefit of the trafficker. Traffickers use devious methods to shield themselves from criminal liability, making it more likely the victim will face liability than the trafficker. Indeed, many victims are inappropriately penalized by law enforcement authorities solely for unlawful acts they were forced to commit. As a result, victims often do not receive necessary services, and law enforcement officials lose the opportunity to work with these victims as witnesses in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers, impeding justice.

## How Forced Criminality Takes Place

Forced criminality may involve criminal offenses such as smuggling of contraband, illegal commercial sex, narcotic production and distribution, financial fraud, theft or robbery, begging, scamming, looting, extortion, and kidnapping. These criminal offenses may involve crossing international borders. Traffickers also often get victims to engage in immigration related offenses, such as fraudulently applying for non-work visas, not having proper visas or other documentation, or possessing forged identity documents. Criminal groups and foreign terrorist organizations exploit vulnerabilities to recruit victims, build trust with victims to manipulate them into committing crimes, or coerce them through fear of losing essential support or retaliation. Armed groups forcibly recruit children from vulnerable groups to serve as combatants and informants.

Traffickers also exploit victims in scam operations around the world. Traffickers lure individuals through fake job offers and then force them – through physical violence, restricted movement, and the withholding of food and water – into operating internet scams. These scams netted criminals an estimated \$25-\$64 billion globally in 2023. Large scam operations have proliferated in Southeast Asia and increasingly in other regions around the world. These operations target U.S. citizens, defrauding them of \$10 billion in 2024 – likely a low-end estimate.

Another form of forced criminality occurs in commercial sexual exploitation. Traffickers use coercion to compel individuals into engaging in commercial sex. Traffickers instill a fear of law enforcement in victims, making victims believe that seeking help will result in penalization – either through criminal charges where commercial sex is illegal or legal penalties for failing to comply with certain laws or regulations in places where it is legal.

## Impact on Anti-Trafficking Work

The interconnectivity of crimes committed by both the trafficker and the victim impedes law enforcement work to identify and disrupt trafficking networks. Often law enforcement and criminal justice personnel who encounter victims of forced criminality are experts in other areas and may struggle to identify that seemingly apparent criminals are actually victims hidden within a complex criminal scheme. As a result, victims of forced criminality are often inappropriately penalized solely for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked, and law enforcement loses the ability to collect evidence to build a case against criminals. To address forced criminality, governments should establish protocols that address forced criminality in the legal framework and train law enforcement to identify human trafficking victims who may first come to their attention via criminal activity.

## **Further Recommendations for Governments:**

Develop and update guidelines for victim identification that include indicators of forced criminality.

Deliver training to first responders, attorneys, and service providers on forced criminality indicators and a victim-centered approach.

Implement the non-punishment principle to protect victims and train first responders, prosecutors, and judges on its application.

Consider the adoption of expungement and vacatur laws to clear victims' criminal records to prevent long-term harm.

Ensure access to victim protection.

Create a referral mechanism for victims to service providers within criminal justice systems for provision of immediate and long-term support.

## **A More Effective Criminal Justice Response**

Enhanced cooperation of victims can lead to more effective trafficking investigations, helping disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations. Stronger trust between victims and authorities enables survivors to access needed services and support law enforcement efforts. By shifting the narrative from punishment to protection and recognizing the realities of human trafficking victims who experience forced criminality, governments can better promote accountability for traffickers and prevent future exploitation.

# Building a Way Forward

Human trafficking is not a static crime. Traffickers are constantly adapting to world events, societal developments, and technological innovations. They capitalize on crises and conflict that displace populations and create vulnerabilities. Many governments have observed new trends in how traffickers target victims and the industries where they seek to perpetrate their crimes. To confront these emerging challenges, the anti-trafficking community must build on the lessons of the past and adapt those best practices for an ever-changing reality.

Instability is a major driver of human trafficking. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees are vulnerable to conflict-related sexual violence – which may include sex trafficking – as they are forced to take desperate risks to secure basic necessities like food, water, and shelter. Recent conflicts illustrate that vulnerability in these situations extends beyond sex trafficking and includes forced labor, the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers, and forced criminality and encompasses not just IDPs and refugees, but also those who remain in their home communities. Traffickers thrive in unstable environments, and people living in these conditions are left with few safe options for employment. Many governments are learning to confront this challenge by building trafficking prevention and victim protection measures into their humanitarian response plans as conflicts emerge.

Extreme weather conditions also displace populations, threaten livelihoods, and increase vulnerabilities to trafficking. Traffickers may take advantage of post-disaster rebuilding and construction, which create markets for cheap labor, to recruit workers into exploitative conditions including labor trafficking. In response, governments are increasingly including anti-trafficking measures in their emergency preparedness plans.

Traffickers also exploit technological innovations. For example, traffickers have capitalized on the shift to digital communication to increase online commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, including of children. They have also significantly expanded online scam operations that run on forcing trafficking victims to carry out scams that defraud individuals around the world. Many governments are now leveraging these same technologies, including artificial intelligence, to expand access to services for victims, speed up processing of trafficking cases in court, increase education and outreach, and build anti-trafficking partnerships.

Partnerships, whether at the local, national, or international level, are critical in the fight against human trafficking. Collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector,

and survivors plays a critical role in developing and implementing sustainable programs and policies to combat trafficking. For example, some governments have worked with the business community to prevent and address forced labor and promote fair labor practices, particularly in high-risk sectors like the textile industry. Governments are also working with civil society to address challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technology. In addition, when governments form partnerships with local and community-based actors, they are able to tailor anti-trafficking programs and policies to the local context and adapt global best practices to the specific environment to achieve the best results.

Anti-trafficking progress, however, has not always been linear. Gains one day may face setbacks the next as traffickers adapt their methods to evade new anti-trafficking measures. As the crime evolves, we may see new challenges, especially in cases where trafficking crimes intersect with other global concerns, such as supply chain security.

In recent years, efforts to prevent forced labor in global supply chains have resulted in significant policy changes and innovations by governments and the private sector. Civil society advocates have urged companies, to varying degrees of success, to monitor their manufacturing processes and address instances of materials produced with forced labor, such as cobalt in renewable energy technologies, cotton or textiles in the garment industry, and seafood processing in the fishing industry. Global supply chains are highly complex and dynamic systems that span multiple countries and companies, complicating efforts to combat forced labor and other exploitative practices. There is also growing awareness of the need to monitor supply chains for inputs produced by state-sponsored forced labor, including by China, Cuba, and North Korea. Some governments have taken actions to prevent goods made with forced labor from entering their markets by enacting laws to prohibit imports of such goods, as well as by passing legislation that addresses specific forced labor concerns, such as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

Globally, the anti-trafficking community still faces challenges, such as how to identify victims and refer them to care, and how to balance prosecution and victim protection priorities in government responses. Crafting local solutions to these challenges in collaboration with survivor leaders and civil society is critical to the success of governments' efforts.

Incorporating best practices learned from those with lived experience of human trafficking into governments' anti-trafficking response produces many benefits, yet many governments face challenges in meaningfully including survivors. Powerful tools, like advisory councils and consultant networks that empower, uplift, and compensate survivor experts, can only reach their full potential if they are developed in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered manner

that respects the experience of survivor leaders and incorporates their expertise in a meaningful way. To do this, governments must be prepared to invest the necessary time, resources, and training to fully commit to survivor engagement.

## The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Trafficking in Persons

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced new complexities to the anti-trafficking landscape, presenting both opportunities and challenges for traffickers and those working to combat the crime. Strategic collaboration among technology companies, law enforcement, and trafficking experts and continuous technological innovation can transform these challenges into opportunities for more effective prevention, intervention, and protection of victims.

### Traffickers' Use of AI

Criminals are increasingly weaponizing AI to enhance their operations, using translation tools to craft culturally nuanced messages that resonate with victims in their native language. Combined with social media and messaging platforms, traffickers can execute sophisticated schemes across different countries, languages, and cultures, making their deception increasingly difficult to detect. Emerging automation capabilities could further enable large-scale victim identification and recruitment. AI advancements exponentially increase risks for vulnerable individuals online, giving traffickers an unprecedented ability to target potential victims by scanning social media data to gain insights into individual vulnerabilities and develop tailored exploitation strategies. AI systems can also be used to automate and scale grooming of potential victims via chatbots optimizing manipulation tactics through natural language processing and sentiment analysis. This represents a dangerous advancement where traffickers use automated systems to help identify and trap victims at an unprecedented scale.

### Emerging Trends

AI-generated text-to-image technology, deepfake photo and video manipulation, voice and video generation, and other forms of content manipulation are used to target and exploit children and adults, including for human trafficking, with women and girls disproportionately impacted by crimes like sextortion and child sexual abuse material (CSAM) production (with more than 20,000 AI-generated CSAM images discovered on a single dark web forum in

2024). While CSAM and sextortion may not always amount to human trafficking as defined under U.S. federal law, they can serve as a gateway to child sex trafficking, as predators use grooming tactics to build relationships with youth before potentially using sextortion as a recruitment strategy. Traffickers may also use AI technologies to mask their identities and victims' identities – portraying themselves as children to build trust with potential child victims online, impersonating trusted friends and family to deceive and control the individual, or as in some online scam operations, concealing labor trafficking victims' identities while exploiting them in forced criminality, often forcing them to use AI-translated scripts and language models to target other victims globally.

## Leveraging AI for Anti-trafficking Efforts

Even as these technologies enable criminal networks, AI can also be a powerful prevention and intervention tool:

AI tools can help protect social media platforms by detecting and flagging harmful or inappropriate content, identifying and preventing unlawful activities, and flagging concerning conversations and suspicious job advertisements in real-time for swift intervention.

AI tools can help educate potential victims through targeted awareness campaigns in multiple languages, adapt messaging to local contexts, and use content provenance technology to track the origin of digital content, creating a more informed and resilient population.

AI technologies can transform how we identify and assist trafficking victims by analyzing online commercial sex advertisements, extracting phrases and language patterns, processing diverse digital evidence, and enabling law enforcement agencies to make data-driven decisions and improve their operational efficiency.

## A Pivotal Opportunity for Impact

The complex relationship between AI and human trafficking demands strategic interventions. While AI offers unprecedented capabilities for detecting and disrupting trafficking networks, it also amplifies the risks of recruitment and exploitation by malicious actors. The path forward requires continuous technological innovation and collaborative efforts, including among technology companies, law enforcement, and anti-trafficking experts. Prioritizing victim protection and technological accountability, we can leverage AI as a powerful tool in

combating human trafficking, transforming potential threats into strategic opportunities for intervention to reduce risks, address vulnerabilities, and prevent the crime.

## Sea Change: Combating Forced Labor in Fishing and Seafood Processing

Fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing play a critical role in the global economy, employing millions of workers, feeding billions of people, and driving hundreds of billions of dollars in annual trade. But this industry has a darker side. As featured throughout this year's TIP Report, distant water and coastal fishing fleets exploit migrant seafarers in forced labor through deception; wage withholding; debt-based coercion; and physical, psychological, sexual, and other abuses facilitated by some influential seafood companies, recruitment agencies, and complicit officials, and the seafood caught and processed through these practices finds its way into markets all over the world.

## Illuminating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Connections

IUU fishing harms marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them for food and livelihoods, including by creating lasting conditions that perpetuate cycles of forced labor. Companies have adjusted to overfished shoals by sending vessels farther out to sea, keeping seafarers onboard for months or years longer than their original contracts against their will. Senior vessel crew often force seafarers to fish illegal stock, including threatened, endangered, and protected species, placing them at higher risk of criminal repercussions from boarding and port inspections.

Forced labor in global fisheries has remained largely hidden from the public eye. Some fishing vessels fly under "flags of convenience" and purposefully obscure the origin and species of their catch to conceal environmental harm and labor rights abuses. Many ships disconnect their transponders to evade law enforcement during illegal high-seas or remote island-based transshipment of IUU fish and seafarers. Identifying individuals who finance or profit from IUU fishing is also a challenge, since beneficial ownership data is often not required during vessel licensing. Even in jurisdictions where this data is collected, verifying its accuracy is difficult due to complex international corporate structures. With this invisibility, and with so much at stake, activists have faced an uphill battle to combat forced labor in the industry – but they are not deterred. Determined to spur action, advocates, survivors, academics, and

reporters around the world have taken great risks to document forced labor on inland, coastal, and deep-sea fishing vessels, as well as in aquaculture and seafood processing. These leaders have carefully and conscientiously woven survivors' voices into their work, assembling hard evidence through in-depth research, high profile news reports, and films. Their efforts shine a light on the hidden nexus between maritime forced labor and environmental harms. Over time, environmental, labor rights, and human trafficking stakeholders began to absorb this information and consider how interdisciplinary approaches would meaningfully address forced labor and IUU fishing together. Governments and regional and international bodies began bolstering labor standards and principles. Regional fisheries bodies started working with the ILO to include the elimination of forced labor in their work.

## Achieving a Meaningful, Sustainable Impact against Forced Labor in Fishing

There is now a wider awareness that some of the world's largest and farthest-reaching fishing fleets bringing in the majority of the annual global marine capture use forced labor in fishing practices that damage marine ecosystems and flood global markets with unethically and illegally sourced products. With this knowledge, governments, IOs, NGOs, and industry must act.

**Governments** must prioritize seafarer victim identification and protection in national anti-trafficking action plans and policies, including by training frontline officers and increasing random inspections of fishing vessels, seafood processing facilities, and recruitment agencies, and by referring findings to law enforcement. They can also pursue complementary accountability measures, such as import restrictions, sanctions, and visa restrictions.

**International stakeholders**, including regional fisheries management organizations, can draw from survivors' lived experience to advance strong labor standards and protections and engage with the world's flag, coastal, port, and market states to promote responsibility and accountability.

**The private sector** should ensure workers' rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, effective grievance mechanisms, and access to communication technology at sea. It should also strengthen due diligence by mapping seafood supply chains with worker input; conducting risk assessments; and implementing fair purchasing practices.

**Civil society** can advocate for workers at sea and on land and can share information and best practices with industry and governments, while ensuring the consent and privacy of



survivors.

Absent this improved cross-sectoral coordination, forced labor in fishing and seafood processing will continue to distort competitiveness in the seafood sector against the backdrop of increasingly fragile marine ecosystems.

## Forced Labor Import Prohibitions

Eliminating forced labor from global supply chains creates a level playing field and makes America more prosperous. It ensures unfair trade practices do not push production to markets with the lowest wages, which harms businesses and workers, bogs down productivity and innovation, threatens consumers, and hurts the global economy. According to the ILO, an estimated 17.4 million people are exploited in forced labor in the private economy, embedded in the supply chains of major industries such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. Additionally, 3.9 million individuals are exploited by state-imposed forced labor in China and several other countries. These forms of exploitation generate an estimated \$236 billion in illegal proceeds annually and, through complex supply chains, can connect legitimate companies and unknowing consumers to this human rights abuse. This crime distorts global trade, undermining legitimate businesses through illegal labor practices that create unfair trade. In addition, forced labor causes widespread economic harm for workers due to lower wages and degraded working conditions. Import prohibitions on goods made with forced labor is one tool governments can deploy.

## The U.S. Tariff Act of 1930 and Similar Efforts

The principal U.S. law advancing this work is the Tariff Act of 1930. Section 307 of this law prohibits importing products that are mined, produced, or manufactured, wholly or in part, by forced labor, including by forced or indentured child labor. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforces Section 307 and has the authority to issue Withhold Release Orders (WROs) when reasonable, but not conclusive, information suggests that forced labor was used, wholly or in part, in the mining, production, or manufacturing of a product. CBP may issue a Finding if the evidence conclusively establishes the use of forced labor. These actions allow for the detention of goods suspected of being made with forced labor, unless the importer establishes by satisfactory evidence that the merchandise is admissible. Goods detained under a Finding may be subject to seizure.

In 2021, Congress passed a related law, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), as a targeted response to the Chinese Communist Party's systematic use of forced labor against Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minorities from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in China. The UFLPA established a rebuttable presumption that the importation of any goods mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part in the XUAR or produced by entities on the UFLPA Entity List is prohibited by Section 307. This followed passage in 2017 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which, among other tools, established a rebuttable presumption that goods mined, produced, or manufactured, wholly or in part, by the labor of North Korean nationals or citizens is prohibited by Section 307.

Canada, Mexico, and the European Union (EU) have all taken similar action. Under the USMCA, each country is required to prohibit the importation of goods into its territory produced in whole or in part by forced or compulsory labor, including forced or child compulsory labor; both Canada and Mexico passed regulations to do so. Additionally, the EU adopted its Regulation on Prohibiting Products Made with Forced Labor on the Union Market in 2024, prohibiting companies from selling within the EU market or exporting any product made wholly or in part with forced labor. This regulation goes into effect in 2027, applying to all companies operating within the EU, regardless of revenue or where they are incorporated.

Countries lacking robust import prohibitions risk becoming a dumping ground for goods made with forced labor, as importers are increasingly turned away from markets with stronger protections. As long as these dumping grounds exist, legitimate businesses will continue to be undercut by companies that exploit workers, affecting jobs and the global economy.

## **Driving Greater Impact**

These prohibitions have already begun to influence company behaviors. Companies are implementing more comprehensive supply chain due diligence, developing sophisticated supply chain tracing mechanisms, and taking action when human rights violations and abuses are discovered. These practices can also frequently lead to the remediation of identified forced labor conditions or the termination of a supplier relationship.

U.S. forced labor-related import prohibitions currently in place have resulted in the denial of thousands of shipments, which, in turn, has shifted demand toward more responsible consumer markets and more transparent, resilient supply chains. Forced labor prohibitions

have also helped to better align democratic values and vital business interests. Collective action by governments worldwide is critical to closing global enforcement gaps, ending forced labor, and ensuring fair and responsible global commerce.

## Empowering Survivors and Addressing Human Trafficking through Advisory Bodies

Survivors of trafficking offer critical expertise that can enhance anti-trafficking efforts at every level of government, helping sharpen the prosecution, protection, and prevention response to this crime. Establishing and supporting advisory bodies as a formal platform is an advantageous model for governments to meaningfully engage survivors as experts and equal partners. The United States' experience with its Advisory Council on Human Trafficking offers valuable insights for other governments to consider.

An advisory body integrates expert guidance into anti-trafficking policy. Its success depends on political will, robust victim protection measures, and a trauma-informed approach. Preparing for meaningful engagement with survivors requires investing significant time and resources to establish, maintain, and uphold accountability systems, protection measures, and survivor-centered care.

When a government agency is ready to establish an advisory body, it should consider the following critical components.

**Establishment:** Identify a pathway that provides legitimacy, structure, and reimbursements and compensation for the advisory body.

**Function and Mandate:** Determine clear objectives for the advisory body. This should include issues on which the advisory body should provide guidance and be consulted.

**Recommendations and Deliverables:** Establish a formal process for the advisory body to document and fulfill its mandate, including deliverables and timelines for submission. Develop a clear strategy and mechanism for the government to take action on the deliverables.

**Autonomy:** Empower the advisory body to self-organize and govern, including deciding its governance structure and protocols, code of conduct, priorities, and how information is gathered and communicated.

**Appointing Members:** Implement screening processes that incorporate a wide range of lived experience of trafficking and are trauma-informed and respectful of privacy to minimize re-traumatization. Consider survivors who demonstrate professionalism and the ability to work on a team, and enable them to support themselves in their ongoing work in the anti-trafficking field or formal workplaces. Keep an open line of communication throughout the appointment process.

**Partnership and Trust:** Develop trusted partnerships, direct communication, and learning opportunities between members of the advisory body and the government. This should include training on trauma-informed engagement for all government personnel who interact with the advisory body and training for advisory body members on how agencies make decisions, allocate funding, and build coalitions and relationships.

**Trauma-Informed Support:** Dedicate a third-party support mechanism separate from the government, but with expertise on government structure and operation, to facilitate the advisory body's work in a trauma-informed way.

**Timely and Commensurate Compensation:** Compensate members in a timely manner for all work related to the advisory body's mandate, including preparation, participation, and debrief from any engagement with the government.

**Communication and Transparency:** Be clear about the scope of work, expectations, and compensation. Be transparent around government functions, including the limitations of government mandates and abilities.

Advisory bodies can ensure government anti-trafficking efforts are grounded in reality and are compassionate, effective, and lasting. They offer a vital pathway for governments to receive invaluable insights into the hidden complexities of traffickers and their networks, the need for nuanced survivor care, and the cultural and socio-economic factors that enable exploitation. A partnership model in which survivors advise the government not only aligns anti-trafficking strategies with real-world needs but also lays the groundwork for systemic improvements and the genuine empowerment of those who have experienced trafficking.

## Conclusion

Global efforts to combat trafficking are far stronger in 2025 than they were in 2000, strengthened by the number of laws passed, traffickers prosecuted, victims protected, and potential crimes prevented. Each of these victories is not just a data point – they are a parent paid for their hard work, or a child protected online. Each of these stories represents safer

communities, stronger rule of law, and more prosperous nations, with the recognition that there is more to do. Sustainable achievements in prosecution, protection, and prevention efforts are only possible when governments, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and survivor leaders work together in partnership against the vast array of trafficking threats and malign actors that continue to operate throughout the world. These partners may not always agree on how to combat trafficking threats. Yet, even where there is disagreement on the best approach, constructive debate that acknowledges and responds to multiple viewpoints can help inform more effective and tailored policies. Looking forward, the anti-trafficking community must embrace this debate and seize opportunities to advance the movement. Traffickers are creative and determined. The anti-trafficking community must continue to be even more creative, drawing on the determined spirit of those who launched the anti-trafficking movement as it presses onward into the next quarter century.

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## Child Soldiers Prevention Act List

Section 402 of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, as amended (CSPA) requires publication in the annual TIP Report of a list of foreign governments identified during the previous year as having governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces, or government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers, as defined in the CSPA. These determinations cover the reporting period beginning April 1, 2024 and ending March 31, 2025.

For the purpose of the CSPA, and generally consistent with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the term “child soldier” means:

- i. any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities as a member of governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
- ii. any person under 18 years of age who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
- iii. any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces; or
- iv. any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state.

The term “child soldier” includes any person described in clauses (ii), (iii), or (iv) who is serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a “cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard, or sex slave.”

Governments identified on the list are subject to restrictions, in the following fiscal year, on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment. The CSPA prohibits assistance to governments that are identified in the list under the following authorities: International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Financing, Excess Defense Articles, and Peacekeeping Operations, with exceptions for some programs undertaken pursuant to the Peacekeeping Operations authority. The CSPA also prohibits the issuance of licenses for direct commercial sales of military equipment to such governments. Beginning October 1, 2025, and effective throughout Fiscal Year 2025, these restrictions will apply to the listed countries, absent a presidential waiver, applicable exception, or reinstatement of assistance pursuant to the terms of the CSPA. The determination to include a government in the CSPA list is informed by a range of sources, including first-hand observation by U.S. government personnel and research and credible reporting from various UN entities, international organizations, local and international NGOs, and international and domestic media outlets.

*Please note that the 2025 Child Soldiers Prevention Act list was not final at the time of releasing the 2025 TIP Report. This section will be updated as soon as possible.*

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## State-Sponsored Trafficking in Persons

The TVPA Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons and the UN TIP Protocol call on governments proactively to address trafficking crimes, but some governments are part of the problem. In 2019, Congress amended the TVPA to acknowledge that governments can also act as human traffickers, referring specifically to a “government policy or pattern” of trafficking; trafficking in government-funded programs; forced labor (in government-affiliated medical services, agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, or other sectors); sexual slavery in government camps, compounds, or outposts; or employing or recruiting child soldiers. This section directly links a government’s “policy or pattern” of trafficking to a Tier 3 ranking.

The 2025 TIP Report includes the following 13 countries with a documented “policy or pattern” of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-

affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers:

Afghanistan\*

Belarus

Burma

Cambodia

China

Cuba

Eritrea

Iran

Korea, Democratic People's Republic Of

Russia

South Sudan

Sudan

Syria (Assad regime)

\* The TIP Report describes the state of human trafficking within a country and with respect to Afghanistan, assesses the actions of Afghan ministries, as well as the Taliban, without implying recognition of the Taliban or another entity as the government of Afghanistan.

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## Methodology

The Department of State prepared this report using credible information as set forth in 22 U.S.C. § 7102(6) collected from U.S. embassies, government officials, nongovernmental and international organizations, published reports, news articles, academic studies, consultations with authorities and organizations in every region of the world, and information submitted to **tipreport@state.gov**. This email address provides a means by which organizations and individuals can share information with the Department of State throughout the year on government progress in addressing human trafficking.

U.S. diplomatic posts and domestic agencies reported on the human trafficking situation and governmental action to fight trafficking based on thorough research that included meetings with a wide variety of government officials, local and international NGO representatives, officials of international organizations, journalists, academics, and survivors. Use of terms such as “services,” “support,” and “care,” throughout the report refer to common elements of victim protections provided to trafficking victims by governments and civil society organizations with which governments partner, including health care, psychosocial care, and shelter. These terms do not refer to any specific type of care, and reference to specific victim service organizations does not constitute an endorsement of those organizations. U.S. missions overseas are dedicated to covering human trafficking issues year-round. The 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report covers government efforts undertaken from April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, to the extent concurrent reporting data is available.

Tier categorization decisions made under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, as amended, (TVPA) entail certain legal effects as set forth in that act. The tier categorizations contained in this report were determined in accordance with the requirements set forth in sections 108 and 110 of the TVPA. Information and allegations included in this report are drawn from the sources identified above and as such do not necessarily represent legal conclusions of the United States.

## Tier Placement

The Department places each country in this report onto one of four categories. This placement is based not on the size of a country's problem but on the extent of government efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, which are generally consistent with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UN TIP Protocol or Palermo Protocol).

While Tier 1 is the highest ranking, it does not mean that a country has no human trafficking problem or that it is doing enough to address the crime. Rather, a Tier 1 ranking indicates that a government has made efforts to address the problem, such as demonstrating appreciable progress each year in combating trafficking, and met the TVPA's minimum standards. Tier 1 represents a responsibility rather than a reprieve.

Tier rankings and narratives in the 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report reflect an assessment of, inter alia, the following:



laws prohibiting severe forms of trafficking in persons, as defined by the TVPA, and provision of criminal punishments for trafficking crimes;

criminal penalties prescribed for human trafficking crimes which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes;

implementation of human trafficking laws through vigorous prosecution of the prevalent forms of trafficking in the country and adequate sentencing of traffickers;

proactive victim identification measures with systematic procedures to guide law enforcement and other government-supported front-line responders in the process of victim identification;

government funding and partnerships with NGOs to provide victims with access to support services, allowing them to recount their trafficking experiences to trained counselors and law enforcement in an environment of minimal pressure;

victim protection efforts that include access to services and shelter without detention and with legal alternatives to removal to countries in which victims would face retribution or hardship;

the extent to which a government ensures victims are provided with legal and other assistance and that, consistent with domestic law, proceedings are not prejudicial to victims' rights, dignity, or psychological well-being;

the extent to which a government ensures the safe, humane, and, to the extent possible, voluntary repatriation and reintegration of victims;

governmental measures to prevent human trafficking, including efforts to curb practices identified as contributing factors to human trafficking, such as employers' confiscation of foreign workers' passports and allowing labor recruiters to charge fees to prospective migrants; and

governmental efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and extraterritorial sexual exploitation and abuse.

Tier rankings and narratives are **NOT** affected by the following:

efforts, however laudable, undertaken exclusively by nongovernmental actors in the country;

general public awareness events—government-sponsored or otherwise—lacking concrete ties to the prosecution of traffickers, protection of victims, or prevention of trafficking; and

broad-based law enforcement or developmental initiatives.

## A Guide to the Tiers

### **Tier 1**

Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

### **Tier 2**

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

### **Tier 2 Watchlist**

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards (with certain exceptions set forth below), and for which:

the *estimated number* of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing and the country is not taking proportional concrete actions; or there is a failure to provide evidence of *increasing efforts* to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials.

### **Tier 3**

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

The TVPA, as amended, lists additional factors to determine whether a country should be on Tier 2 (or Tier 2 Watch List) versus Tier 3:

the extent to which the country is a country of origin, transit, or destination for severe forms of trafficking;

the extent to which the country's government does not meet the TVPA's minimum standards and, in particular, the extent to which officials or government employees have been complicit in severe forms of trafficking;

reasonable measures that the government would need to undertake to be in compliance with the minimum standards in light of the government's resources and capabilities to address and eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons;

the extent to which the government is devoting sufficient budgetary resources to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, convict and sentence traffickers; and obtain restitution for victims of human trafficking; and

the extent to which the government is devoting sufficient budgetary resources to protect victims and prevent the crime from occurring.

In addition, the TVPA directs the Secretary of State to consider, as proof of a country's failure to make significant efforts to fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, a government policy or pattern of: human trafficking; human trafficking in government-funded programs; forced labor (in government-affiliated medical services, agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, or other sectors); sexual slavery in government camps, compounds, or outposts; or employing or recruiting child soldiers.

The TVPA also provides that any country that has been ranked Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years and that would otherwise be ranked Tier 2 Watch List for the next year will instead be ranked Tier 3 in that third year. The Secretary of State is authorized to waive the automatic downgrade only once, in that third year, based on credible evidence that a waiver is justified because the government has a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute making significant efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is devoting sufficient resources to implement the plan. The following year, a country must either go up to Tier 2 or down to Tier 3. Additionally, the TVPA limits a country to one year on Tier 2 Watch List after that country received a waiver to stay on Tier 2 Watch List and was subsequently downgraded to Tier 3.

### **Funding Restrictions for Tier 3 Countries**

Pursuant to the TVPA, governments on Tier 3 may be subject to certain restrictions on foreign assistance, whereby the President may determine not to provide U.S. government nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance as defined in the TVPA. In addition, the President may determine to withhold funding for government official or employee participation in educational and cultural exchange programs in the case of certain Tier 3

countries. Consistent with the TVPA, the President may also determine to instruct the U.S. Executive Director of each multilateral development bank and the International Monetary Fund to vote against and use their best efforts to deny any loans or other uses of the institutions' funds to a designated Tier 3 country for most purposes (except for humanitarian, trade-related, and certain development-related assistance). Alternatively, the President may waive application of the foregoing restrictions upon a determination that the provision to a Tier 3 country of such assistance would promote the purposes of the TVPA or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. The TVPA also authorizes the President to waive these restrictions if necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations, including women and children.

Applicable assistance restrictions apply for the next Fiscal Year, which begins October 1, 2025. 

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## TVPA Minimum Standards For The Elimination of Trafficking in Persons

Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, Div. A of Pub. L. No. 106-386, § 108, as amended.

(1) The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.

(2) For the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child incapable of giving meaningful consent, or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death, the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault.

(3) For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.

(4) The government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

Indicia of "Serious and Sustained Efforts"

- i. Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates and prosecutes acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and convicts and sentences persons responsible for such acts, that take place wholly or partly within the territory of the country, including, as appropriate, requiring incarceration of individuals convicted of such acts. For purposes of the preceding sentence, suspended or significantly reduced sentences for convictions of principal actors in cases of severe forms of trafficking in persons shall be considered, on a case-by-case basis, whether to be considered an indicator of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data, consistent with a demonstrably increasing capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted or sentenced such acts.
- ii. Whether the government of the country protects victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons and encourages their assistance in the investigation and prosecution of such trafficking, including provisions for legal alternatives to their removal to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship, and ensures that victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for un-lawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked, including by providing training to law enforcement and immigration officials regarding the identification and treatment of trafficking victims using approaches that focus on the needs of the victims.
- ii. Whether the government of the country has adopted measures to prevent severe forms of trafficking in persons, such as measures to inform and educate the public, including potential victims, about the causes and consequences of severe forms of trafficking in persons, measures to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration, citizenship, and nationality, measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, a transparent system for remediating or punishing such public officials as a deterrent, measures to pre-vent the use of forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards, effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information sharing and cooperation arrangements with other countries, and effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruiters and holding them civilly and criminally liable for fraudulent recruiting.
- v. Whether the government of the country cooperates with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of severe forms of trafficking in persons and has entered

into bilateral, multilateral, or regional law enforcement cooperation and coordination arrangements with other countries.

- v. Whether the government of the country extradites persons charged with acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons on substantially the same terms and to substantially the same extent as persons charged with other serious crimes (or, to the extent such extradition would be inconsistent with the laws of such country or with international agreements to which the country is a party, whether the government is taking all appropriate measures to modify or replace such laws and treaties so as to permit such extradition).
- i. Whether the government of the country monitors immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of severe forms of trafficking in persons and whether law enforcement agencies of the country respond to any such evidence in a manner that is consistent with the vigorous investigation and prosecution of acts of such trafficking, as well as with the protection of human rights of victims and the internationally recognized human right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's own country.
  - ii. Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates, prosecutes, convicts, and sentences public officials, including diplomats and soldiers, who participate in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons, including nationals of the country who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, and takes all appropriate measures against officials who condone or enable such trafficking. A government's failure to appropriately address public allegations against such public officials, especially once such officials have returned to their home countries, shall be considered inaction under these criteria. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding such investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data, consistent with a demonstrably increasing capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts.
- ii. Whether the percentage of victims of severe forms of trafficking in the country that are non-citizens of such countries is insignificant.
- x. Whether the government has entered into effective, transparent partnerships, cooperative arrangements, or agreements that have resulted in concrete and measurable outcomes with –

- a. domestic civil society organizations, private sector entities, or international nongovernmental organizations, or into multilateral or regional arrangements or agreements, to assist the government's efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and punish traffickers; or
    - b. the United States toward agreed goals and objectives in the collective fight against trafficking.
  - x. Whether the government of the country, consistent with the capacity of such government, systematically monitors its efforts to satisfy the criteria described in paragraphs (1) through (8) and makes available publicly a periodic assessment of such efforts.
  - xi. Whether the government of the country achieves appreciable progress in eliminating severe forms of trafficking when compared to the assessment in the previous year.
  - ii. Whether the government of the country has made serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for –
    - a. commercial sex acts; and
    - b. participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country.
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Countries in the 2025 TIP Report that were not Party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, during the reporting period:

Congo, Republic of the

Iran

Korea, Democratic People's Republic of

Marshall Islands

Papua New Guinea

Soloman Islands

South Sudan

Tonga

Vanuatu

Yemen

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Somalia became a State Party to the Protocol.

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## Tier Placements List



**Tier 1**

Argentina	Finland	Seychelles
Australia	France	Singapore
Austria	Georgia	Slovenia
Bahamas, The	Germany	Spain
Bahrain	Guyana	Suriname
Belgium	Iceland	Sweden
Canada	Korea, Republic of	Taiwan
Chile	Lithuania	United Kingdom
Cyprus	Luxembourg	United States
Czechia	Netherlands	
Denmark	Philippines	
Estonia	Poland	

## Tier 2

Albania	Honduras	North Macedonia
Angola	Hungary	Norway
Antigua and Barbuda	India	Oman
Armenia	Indonesia	Pakistan
Aruba	Iraq	Palau
Azerbaijan	Ireland	Panama
Bangladesh	Israel	Paraguay
Belize	Italy	Peru
Benin	Jamaica	Portugal
Bhutan	Japan	Qatar
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Jordan	Romania
Botswana	Kazakhstan	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Bulgaria	Kenya	Saudi Arabia
Burundi	Kosovo	Senegal
Cameroon	Kuwait	Serbia
Central African Republic	Latvia	Sierra Leone
Colombia	Lebanon	Slovakia
Comoros	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Costa Rica	Madagascar	Switzerland
Côte d'Ivoire	Malawi	Tajikistan
Croatia	Malaysia	Tanzania
Curaçao	Mali	Thailand
Dominican Republic	Malta	Timor-Leste
Ecuador	Marshall Islands	Togo
Egypt	Mauritania	Tonga
El Salvador	Mauritius	Trinidad and Tobago
Equatorial Guinea	Mexico	Turkey (Türkiye)
Eswatini	Micronesia, Federated States of	Uganda
Ethiopia	Moldova	Ukraine
Gabon	Mongolia	United Arab Emirates
Gambia, The	Montenegro	Uruguay
Ghana	Morocco	Uzbekistan
Greece	Mozambique	Vietnam
Guatemala	Namibia	Zambia
Guinea	New Zealand	
Guinea-Bissau	Nigeria	

## Tier 2 Watch List

Algeria	Djibouti	Saint Lucia
Barbados	Fiji	Solomon Islands
Bolivia	Hong Kong S.A.R.	South Africa
Brazil	Kyrgyzstan	Tunisia
Brunei	Liberia	Turkmenistan
Burkina Faso	Maldives	Vanuatu
Cabo Verde	Nepal	Zimbabwe
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	Niger	
Congo, Republic of	Rwanda	

## Tier 3

Afghanistan	Eritrea	Russia
Belarus	Iran	Sint Maarten
Burma	Korea, Democratic Republic of	South Sudan
Cambodia	Laos	Sudan
Chad	Macau S.A.R.	Syria
China	Nicaragua	Venezuela
Cuba	Papua New Guinea	

## Special Case

Haiti  
Libya  
Somalia  
Yemen

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# Regional Maps

The Regional Maps will be included in the PDF accessible online version. Below includes the region-specific Global Law Enforcement Data.

## Africa

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEG
2018	1,253	37	1,190	29	24,407	3,749	2
2019	955	71	2,122	32	42,517	1,284	2
2020	1,493	251	382	107	28,538	6,947	8
2021	1,686	265	659	68	11,450	3,643	3
2022	2,477	388	904	139	21,790	5,436	5
2023	2,551	460	758	200	21,178	7,834	2
2024	3,541	1,157	1,115	191	11,383	5,669	3

## East Asia & Pacific

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEGI
2018	2,351	63	1,275	16	5,466	291	1
2019	3,276	86	3,662	20	14,132	7,687	2
2020	1,838	70	1,502	12	2,884	691	1
2021	1,440	73	1,066	60	3,348	859	0
2022	4,570	708	1,607	63	4,635	2,037	3
2023	3,390	398	1,802	97	6,543	1,161	2
2024	2,933	517	2,357	95	3,611	1,230	1

## Europe

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEGI
<b>2018</b>	2,394	234	1,379	80	16,838	2,675	1
<b>2019</b>	2,896	106	1,346	41	17,383	1,369	2
<b>2020</b>	2,355	101	1,291	33	18,173	1,082	2
<b>2021</b>	3,285	86	1,905	92	21,347	2,124	5
<b>2022</b>	2,932	169	1,668	67	24,528	2,497	6
<b>2023</b>	3,147	201	1,667	93	32,975	4,448	4
<b>2024</b>	2,960	212	1,674	152	18,865	2,148	3

## Near East

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEGI
<b>2018</b>	738	10	155	7	2,675	83	0
<b>2019</b>	788	44	419	22	3,619	35	0
<b>2020</b>	533	106	414	84	3,461	1,827	0
<b>2021</b>	869	356	353	88	3,440	1,127	1
<b>2022</b>	644	173	545	85	2,980	1,790	0
<b>2023</b>	2,258	1,344	770	390	3,450	1,596	2
<b>2024</b>	1,743	715	990	350	4,447	2,563	0

## South & Central Asia

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEGI
2018	3,102	41	2,465	9	24,544	1,841	1
2019	2,602	616	1,156	349	28,929	3,227	1
2020	2,747	532	834	74	45,060	3,275	3
2021	1,910	479	438	17	38,426	12,426	2
2022	3,304	1,118	597	104	49,715	11,161	1
2023	6,041	1,101	1,245	368	50,815	23,089	0
2024	2,754	1,287	1,177	621	41,304	11,107	3

## Western Hemisphere

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW AME LEGI
2018	1,252	72	1,017	177	11,683	2,370	0
2019	1,324	101	843	34	12,352	273	0
2020	910	55	588	27	11,100	626	2
2021	1,382	120	794	49	12,343	1,040	4
2022	1,232	114	256	70	11,676	1,419	12
2023	1,387	180	903	108	19,008	4,372	4
2024	1,860	136	662	67	22,417	5,042	6

## Global Law Enforcement Data

The 2003 reauthorization of the TVPA added to the original law a new requirement that foreign governments provide the Department of State with data on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences in order to fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (Tier 1). The 2004 TIP Report collected this data for the first time. The 2007 TIP Report showed for the first time a breakout of the number of total prosecutions and convictions that related to labor trafficking, placed in parentheses.

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	Prosecutions – Labor Only	CONVICTIONS	Convictions – Labor Only	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	Victims Identified – Labor Only	NEW OI AMEND LEGISL/
2018	11,096	457	7,481	259	85,613	11,009	5
2019	11,841	1,024	9,548	498	111,932	13,875	7
2020	9,876	1,115	5,011	337	109,216	14,448	16
2021	10,572	1,379	5,260	374	90,354	21,219	15
2022	15,159	2,670	5,577	528	115,324	24,340	27
2023	18,774	3,684	7,145	1,256	133,939	42,500	14
2024	15,791	4,024	7,975	1,476	102,027	27,759	16

*The above statistics are estimates derived from data provided by foreign governments and other sources and reviewed by the Department of State. Aggregate data fluctuates from one year to the next due to the hidden nature of trafficking crimes, dynamic global events, shifts in government efforts, and a lack of uniformity in national reporting structures.*

## Stopping Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by International Peacekeepers and Civilian Personnel

As required by law, this section summarizes actions taken by the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to prevent trafficking in persons or the exploitation of victims of trafficking during calendar year 2024.

	United Nations	OSCE	NATO
<b>Total Number of Peacekeeping and Support Personnel</b>	68,418	2,243	9,243
<b>Total Number of Missions</b>	11	14	4
<b>Prevention Policy</b>	Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (SEA) (2003)	<p>Code of Conduct for Staff and Mission Members (2003)</p> <p>Staff Instruction No. 11/2004: Preventing the Promotion/Facilitation of Trafficking in Human Beings (2004)</p> <p>Staff Instructions No. 32/2022: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) (2022)</p> <p>In 2023, the OSCE appointed PSEA focal points to raise awareness of Staff Instruction 32 and provide guidance on how to prevent and respond to incidents.</p> <p>Staff Instruction No. 33/2023: Whistleblowing and Protection against Retaliation (2023)</p> <p>The OSCE revised its contractual arrangements with external providers, including the General Conditions of Contract for both goods and services, as well as the standard Implementing Partner Agreement. These revisions now incorporate clauses mandating contractors to implement suitable</p>	NATO Policy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2023)



to implement suitable measures for preventing and addressing SEA by their employees or any individuals engaged in providing services to the OSCE. (2023)

**Lead Office Responsible for Implementation**

The Conduct and Discipline Service (CDS)  
  
The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Secretary General

Department of Human Resources

Office of Internal Oversight

Human Security Unit

International Military Staff

Heads of NATO Military Bodies

**Prevention Training**

Prevention training includes pre-deployment and at mission training, including an e-learning program.

OSCE Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse mandatory online training.

Coffee Briefing on the role of the PSEA Focal Points (October 2024).

Investigation training, led by Office of Internal Oversight (March 2024).

Nations have the responsibility to provide training to prevent trafficking in persons, conflict related sexual violence, and SEA both prior to deployment and during missions or operations.

NATO mandates completion of a course that focuses on identifying, preventing, and responding to SEA.

Nations are responsible for the provision of pre-deployment training of their personnel in accordance with NATO standards.

Heads of NATO Bodies are responsible for providing training to their personnel.

**Number of Allegations in 2024**

102 allegations were made against military, police, and civilian personnel in 2024. These allegations identified 125 victims, 27 of whom are

The OSCE Department for Human Resources had no record of any reported allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse in 2024.

No allegations were reported in 2024. (NATO relies on contributing countries to report allegations).

children.

This is the third time in the past 10 years that 100 or more allegations were recorded in one year.

Eighty-two percent of the alleged incidents took place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Central African Republic. The alleged incidents occurred during the MONUSCO and MONUC missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (44 allegations) and MINUSCA mission in the Central African Republic (40 allegations).

The OSCE Office of Internal Oversight did not receive any allegations of SEA in 2024.

**New Initiatives  
in 2024**

In May 2024, the High-level Steering Group endorsed a model Peacekeeper Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) clause for UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, establishing a system-wide Framework for PSEA in countries. The framework will enhance government capacities and promote an inclusive aligned approach to SEA by engaging all sectors and stakeholders.

In 2024, the Office of the Special Coordinator on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCSEA) developed a

There were no new initiatives to report.

There were no new initiatives to report.

PSEA Practical Toolkit for Senior Leaders that offers essential guidance on PSEA responsibilities, equipping leaders with tools to respond effectively and model appropriate conduct.

In 2024, OSCSEA and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance launched an initiative to jointly analyze data from the UN iReport system and the sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment Harmonized Reporting Scheme, which aggregates anonymous data from over 74 non-governmental organizations. The initiative helped identify critical trends and fostered learning from aggregated data, providing critical insights to inform policies and strategies.

Links for Additional Information	Conduct in UN Field Missions	NATO   Human Security	
	Paternity Claims   Conduct in UN Field Missions	Report wrongdoing   OSCE	
		About the Office of Internal Oversight	

## Relevant International Conventions

The chart below shows the Ratification, Accession (a), or Acceptance (A) of relevant international conventions for those countries that have ratified, acceded to, or accepted any

such conventions between April 2024 and March 2025. A complete list that includes the status of all of the countries covered by the Trafficking in Persons Report is available at: <https://www.state.gov/international-conventions-relevant-to-combating-trafficking-in-persons/>.

Country	UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000)	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000)	ILO Convention 29, Forced Labour (1930)	ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention	ILO Convention 105, Abolition of Forced Labour (1957)	ILC Co 18: of (19
Barbados	2014	–	–	1967	–	1967	200
Pakistan	2022 (a)	2011	2016	1957	2025 (will enter into force on 14 March 2026)	1960	200
Somalia	2025 (a)	–	–	1960	–	1961	200

## International, Regional, and Sub-Regional Organizations Combating Trafficking in Persons

Organizations and Selected Links of Interest	Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance	TIP Focal Point
<b>United Nations (UN)</b>	<a href="#">Global Progress Report on the Sustainable Development Goals</a> (2024)	UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
United Nations (UN)		
<b>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – Trafficking in Persons</b>	Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Siobhán Mullaly – Trafficking in persons and gender and peace and security (A/79/161) (2024)	UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – Trafficking in Persons	<a href="#">UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons</a> (2024)	UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography
<b>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</b>	<a href="#">IOM Report on the 114<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council (C/114/11)</a> (2024)	
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	<a href="#">IOM World Migration Report</a> (2024)	
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): Trafficking in Persons	<a href="#">Joint Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons – Children Face Rising Threats of Trafficking in Persons: Action is Urgent and Essential!</a> (2024)	
<b>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</b>	<a href="#">Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons Issue Paper – Sustainable Finance and Trafficking in Persons</a> (2024)	
International Organization for Migration (IOM)		
<b>The Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons:</b>	<a href="#">Report of the Secretary General: Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (A/79/70-E/2024/54)</a> (2024)	
The Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons		
<b>International Labour Organization (ILO)</b>	<a href="#">ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Trends</a> (2025)	
International Labour Organization (ILO)	<a href="#">From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (The Bridge Project II)</a> (2024)	

[Fair Recruitment Initiative -Global study on recruitment fees and related costs: Second edition](#) (2024)

[Acting against forced labour: An assessment of investment requirements and economic benefits](#) (2024)

[Forced labour in commercial fishing](#) (2024)

## **African Union (AU)**

African Union (AU)

Africa Strengthens Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants with Validated Continental Guidelines | African Union (2024)

**Khartoum Process** (EU/Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative)

Khartoum Process Fact Sheet v20 (2024)

Khartoum Process (EU/Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative)

Outcome Document: Joint High-Level Meeting Khartoum Process and Rabat Process – Empowering EU-Africa Cooperation: Innovative Pathways for Skills Mobility (2024)

## **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

[ASEAN Regional Forum Annual Security Outlook](#) (2024)

ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime

[\(MERL\) Framework for the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023-2028 \(BOHOL TIP Work Plan 2.0\)](#) (2024)

[ASEAN Migration Outlook Second Edition](#) (2024)

ASEAN Guidelines on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers (2024)

**Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process)**

[Regional Support Office of the Bali Process Strategic Plan 2024-2026](#) (2025)

Bali Process Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

[New Frontiers: The Use of Generative](#)

Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime	<a href="#">Artificial Intelligence to Facilitate Trafficking in Persons Policy</a> (2024)	
Working Group on Trafficking in Persons – The Bali Process		
<b>Colombo Process</b>	<a href="#">Empowering Migrant Workers with Adequate Access to Information and Inclusive Services Throughout the Migration Cycle</a> (2024)	
Colombo Process	<a href="#">Enhancing Employability and Decent Work for Migrant Workers Through the Mutual Recognition of Their Skills and Qualifications</a> (2024)	
<b>Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)</b>	<i>No relevant Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance were published during the reporting period.</i>	
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (in Russian only)		
<b>Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT)</b>	<i>No relevant Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance were published during the reporting period.</i>	United Nations Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons
Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT Process)		Regional COMMIT Task Force
<b>Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)</b>	<a href="#">Annual Report of the Finnish Presidency of the CBSS 2023-2024</a> (2024)	Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB)
Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	<a href="#">Handbook for Forensic Child Interview in Presumed Cases of Trafficking</a> (2024)	Expert Group on Children at Risk
	<a href="#">ISA: Acute Crisis Intervention</a> (2024)	Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings
	<a href="#">Creating a Cycle of Protection: Guiding Principles and Key Considerations for Developing Comprehensive Child-centered Cooperation to Identify</a>	

Centered Cooperation to Identity, Support, and Assist Trafficked Children  
(2024)

<b>Council of Europe (COE)</b>	The Financial Approach to Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2025)	Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)
<u>Council of Europe (COE)</u>		
COE Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	Guidance Note on the Recovery and Reflection Period (2024)	
The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Meetings	GRETA holds its 52 plenary meeting – Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2024)	
The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Meetings	GRETA holds its 53rd plenary meeting and elects its Bureau (2025)	
<b>Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)</b>	<i>No relevant Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance were published during the reporting period.</i>	
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)		
<b>Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)</b>	Experts From ECOWAS Member States Commit to Strengthened Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnership in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Crimes in the Region   Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2024)	The ECOWAS Regional Network of National Focal Institutions Against Trafficking in Persons Plus  Anti-Trafficking Unit
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)		
Home – ECCAS Official Website		
<b>European Union (EU)</b>	Progress report on combatting Trafficking in Human Beings – European Commission (Fifth Report) (2025)	European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator  EU Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms
European Union (EU)	Directive (EU) 2024-1712 of the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011-36-EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims	EU Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings



	(2024)	Coordination Group of the EU agencies working against trafficking in human beings
	<a href="#">Proposal for a regulation on police cooperation to counter migrant smuggling and human trafficking Targeted substitute impact assessment</a> (2025)	
<b>Financial Action Task Force (FATF)</b>	<a href="#">FATF Annual Report 2023-2024</a> (2024)	
Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	FATF Recommendations (updated in 2025)	
<b>League of Arab States (LAS)</b>	<i>No relevant Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance were published during the reporting period.</i>	
League of Arab States (LAS)		
<b>Organization of American States (OAS)</b>	<a href="#">Access to and Use of Civil Registration by Migrants and Refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean</a> (2024)	Department of Public Security and Department against Transnational Organized Crime
Organization of American States (OAS)	Toolbox to Respond to Human Trafficking PICAD (2025)	
	Combatting Illegal Activities Linked to Migrants and Refugees Exploitation: Why it Matters? (2025)	
<b>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)</b>	<a href="#">OECD Review of Fisheries</a> (2025)	OECD Task Force on Countering Illicit Trade
	OECD ODA Casebook on activities in the field of migration (2025)	
The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)		
<b>Organization for Islamic Cooperation</b>	<i>No relevant Framework Documents and other Relevant Guidance were published during the reporting period.</i>	
Organization for Islamic Cooperation		
<b>Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)</b>	<a href="#">New frontiers: The use of generative artificial intelligence to facilitate trafficking in persons</a> (2024)	Special Representative and Coordinator for Trafficking in Human Beings

Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe (OSCE  
)

**OSCE Alliance against  
Trafficking in Persons**

OSCE Alliance against  
Trafficking in Persons

[Policy action to address technology-  
facilitated trafficking in human beings](#)  
(2024)

[Invisible victims: The nexus between  
disabilities and trafficking in human  
beings](#) (2024)

[Out of the Shadows: Addressing the  
Dynamics of Trafficking in Persons  
Belonging to Minorities, including  
National Minorities](#) (2024)

[Guidance on establishing and  
maintaining National Survivors of  
Trafficking Advisory Councils \(NSTACS\)](#)  
(2024)

Stronger action to identify victims and  
protect the most vulnerable needed,  
say OSCE leaders on world anti-  
trafficking day (2024)

OSCE leaders and anti-trafficking  
experts underscore need to rethink  
prevention methods to address  
evolving trafficking tactics (2024)

**Regional Conference on  
Migration (RCM) (Puebla  
Group)**

Regional Conference of  
Migration (RCM) (Puebla  
Group)

*No relevant Framework Documents and  
other Relevant Guidance were published  
during the reporting period.*

The Liaison Officers  
Network to Combat  
Migrant Smuggling and  
Trafficking in Persons

**Southern African  
Development Community  
(SADC)**

Southern African  
Development Community  
(SADC)

Score Card – SADC Code of Conduct on  
Child Labour  
(2024)

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# Annual Report to Congress on the Use of Child Soldiers under Section 405(c) of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008

*Please note this report was not final at the time of releasing the 2025 TIP Report. This section will be updated as soon as possible.*

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## Glossary of Abbreviations

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUROPOL</b>	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
<b>FARC</b>	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
<b>GRETA</b>	Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INTERPOL</b>	International Criminal Police Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
<b>IUU</b>	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanism
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UN TIP Protocol (Palermo Protocol)</b>	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Notes: Local currencies have been converted to U.S. dollars (\$) using the currency exchange rates reported by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on December 31, 2024.

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### Africa (Sub-Saharan)

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<a href="#">Central African Republic</a>	<a href="#">Gabon</a>	<a href="#">Mali</a>	<a href="#">Seychelles</a>	<a href="#">Zimbabwe</a>
<a href="#">Chad</a>	<a href="#">Gambia, The</a>	<a href="#">Mauritania</a>	<a href="#">Sierra Leone</a>	
<a href="#">Comoros</a>	<a href="#">Ghana</a>	<a href="#">Mauritius</a>	<a href="#">Somalia</a>	

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<a href="#">Bahrain</a>	<a href="#">Israel, West Bank and Gaza</a>	<a href="#">Libya</a>	<a href="#">Saudi Arabia</a>	<a href="#">Yemen</a>
<a href="#">Egypt</a>	<a href="#">Jordan</a>	<a href="#">Morocco</a>	<a href="#">Syria</a>	
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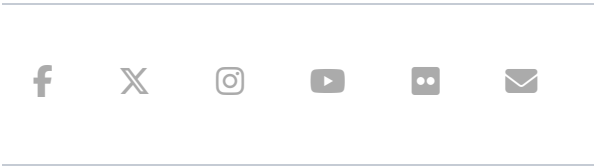
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