



2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Italy

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 27 June 2017

Cite as United States Department of State, *2017 Trafficking in Persons Report - Italy*, 27 June 2017, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5959ecb3a.html> [accessed 17 August 2017]

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

ITALY: TIER 1

The Government of Italy fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period; therefore, Italy remained on Tier 1. The government demonstrated serious and sustained efforts by publishing guidelines for the identification of trafficking victims among the large influx of irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, and unaccompanied children, increasing funding for NGOs providing shelter and other assistance to victims, and increasing the number of investigations of trafficking cases and convictions of traffickers compared to the previous year. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it did not indict any trafficking suspects in 2016 under the 2003 Measures Against Trafficking in Persons law according to partial data for the year, and did not report data on the specific length of sentences imposed on convicted traffickers. Government-supported NGOs remained underfunded in light of the need, and many victims among vulnerable groups went unidentified, especially at reception centers charged with screening and processing the large number of migrants and refugees. The government also did not implement any nationwide public awareness campaigns.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ITALY

Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking cases, including of allegedly complicit government officials, and convict and sentence traffickers with dissuasive sanctions; implement guidelines under the national plan to improve identification of possible trafficking victims among both migrants and asylum-seekers; increase efforts to screen foreigners working in prostitution as possible trafficking victims; consistently train law enforcement, migration officers, first responders, and other officials across all regions and localities on identification and referral procedures; provide adequate long-term funding to NGOs assisting victims; improve specialized services for child trafficking victims and expand accommodation for male victims; establish a national coordination structure that involves all relevant public bodies and NGOs, compiles comprehensive data that disaggregates between sex and labor trafficking cases, monitors efforts, and discloses the information to the public; allow asylum-seekers to obtain legal employment while their applications are reviewed; simplify applications for victim compensation to encourage more victims to report trafficking crimes; increase international cooperation with source and transit countries, especially Nigeria, to counter trafficking rings; make efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism and increase prosecutions of participants, in particular Italians who

purchase sex from children abroad; implement nationwide awareness-raising activities on all forms of trafficking; and address demand for commercial sex and availability of inexpensive goods that drive trafficking, including through supply chain and government procurement policies.

PROSECUTION

The government increased law enforcement efforts. The 2003 Measures Against Trafficking in Persons law prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes penalties of eight to 20 years imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. The government reported disaggregated statistics to identify trafficking crimes versus crimes related to prostitution. The government did not disaggregate law enforcement statistics involving labor trafficking crimes. Under the Measures Against Trafficking in Persons law (trafficking law), authorities investigated 102 cases of trafficking in 2016, compared with 65 in 2015 and 44 in 2014. The government did not indict any defendants under the trafficking law in 2016, compared with 17 in 2015 and 16 in 2014. Trial courts convicted nine traffickers under the trafficking law in 2016, compared to one in 2015 and 11 in 2014. Appellate courts reported convictions of 23 defendants in 2016, compared to 11 in 2015 and 11 in 2014. Data for 2016 was partial, a compilation of reports from 80 percent of prosecutors and 60 percent of courts. The government did not report specific data on sentences imposed under the trafficking law in 2016 or in years prior, and stated only that convicted traffickers generally received prison sentences ranging from six to nine years. The government also prosecuted cases under laws relating to slavery and exploitation to prostitution, outside of the definitions within the trafficking law, and statistics for those cases are not included above.

The training curriculum for law enforcement agencies included victim identification and investigation of trafficking crimes; the government did not report how many officers received training. There were isolated reports of government officials complicit in human trafficking. Authorities launched one investigation involving a police officer and his wife accused of providing apartments to Brazilian workers, who were suspected trafficking victims, and demanding excessive rent.

PROTECTION

The government increased funding for trafficking victim assistance, but overall protection remained weak and uncoordinated given the number of victims in need. The government did not report how many victims it identified or statistics on the form of trafficking or the age, gender, or nationality of victims identified or assisted. Police reported assisting 101 trafficking victims. The Department of Equal Opportunity (DEO), the entity responsible for coordinating protection efforts, reported government-supported NGOs assisted 851 potential victims in 2016 (which likely included the 101 assisted by police), similar to the 800 victims assisted in 2015; however, this figure did not clearly differentiate between victims of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Of the total, 172 were men and seven were transgender. Children represented nearly 10 percent of the trafficking victims receiving assistance, mostly boys forced to beg or commit robbery. Approximately 45 percent were from Nigeria, although an international organization estimated up to 75 percent of the more than 11,000 Nigerian women and unaccompanied children who arrived in Italy in 2016 were trafficking victims. The government relied predominantly on NGOs and international organizations to provide shelter and services to victims, which continued to cite insufficient funding and lack of a formal referral mechanism as serious problems. Experts reported the reception centers were too few, unsuited for trafficking victims, and accessible to traffickers to recruit victims. These issues persisted in reception areas where migrants and refugees waited for shelter and contributed to increased instances of labor and sex trafficking. The government allotted €14.5 million (\$15.28 million) exclusively to trafficking victim assistance programs implemented by NGOs in 2016, a significant increase from €8 million (\$8.43 million) allocated in

2015. Local governments provided additional funds to victim assistance programs, although figures were not available. Government-funded NGOs provided separate facilities for men and unaccompanied children.

Article 13 of the Law on Trafficking in Persons (228/2003) provides for three to six months of victim assistance, and after initial assistance, victims may be eligible for temporary residency and work permit. Adult victims were entitled to a six-month temporary residence permit that was renewable if the victim found employment or enrolled in a job training program, and the government granted 340 such permits to victims in 2016. Child victims automatically received a residence permit until age 18 and were accommodated in generalized children's centers or in open centers established for trafficking victims who were also asylum-seekers. Children received counseling and were enrolled in local public schools with the support of mentors. However, by November 2016, an estimated 38 percent of unaccompanied children identified by authorities had left the centers. The government granted 324 temporary residence permits for victims of exploitation in 2015; it was unclear how many recipients were trafficking victims. Although victims were not required to cooperate with law enforcement to obtain a residence permit, some NGOs and international organizations reported authorities gave preference to those who cooperated.

Police worked in collaboration with NGOs and international organizations to screen for trafficking victims as part of standard registration procedures at most ports of entry. NGOs reported, however, many trafficking victims went unidentified among the irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, and unaccompanied children due to officials' inconsistent use of identification criteria. Therefore, although the law protects victims from being penalized for unlawful acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, unidentified victims may have been treated as regular asylum-seekers or illegal migrants, the latter sometimes subject to prosecution and deportation. To address the need for better identification on entry, the Ministry of Interior published guidelines in December 2016 for the identification of trafficking victims among asylum-seekers to be used by the regional committees that adjudicate asylum applications.

PREVENTION

The government maintained limited trafficking prevention efforts. In October 2016, the government began implementation of the anti-trafficking national action plan through an interagency committee representing multiple government agencies, and which included grants for 18 NGO-run projects to assist victims and promote their social inclusion. The DEO, under the leadership of the Undersecretary of State to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, was the designated coordinator of the interagency steering committee on trafficking and also monitored and evaluated protection and prevention programs. Government officials, NGOs, and international organizations cited insufficient coordination on anti-trafficking efforts. During the first three quarters of 2016, the government inspected 94,025 companies, identified over 30,000 unregistered workers, and found 1,124 workers without residence permits; the government did not report whether it screened or identified potential trafficking cases as a part of their inspection process. The government did not implement any nationwide public awareness campaigns. Local authorities and NGOs continued to distribute brochures, posters, bumper stickers, and media advertisements providing information on victim assistance. The government's hotline for victims of trafficking received more than 2,900 calls for information, of which 899 related to trafficking. Local municipalities and police supported education campaigns led by NGOs aimed at reducing the demand for commercial sex. Although Italians engaged in child sex tourism in various countries abroad, the government did not address the demand for child sex tourism or prosecute Italian citizens who participated, nor did it make any tangible efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor. The government expanded its international anti-trafficking efforts focusing on assistance to vulnerable youth populations, including a communication campaign in the Horn of Africa and

West Africa to inform potential migrants of the risks of trafficking. The government provided anti-trafficking training to diplomats, as well as troops prior to deployment with international peacekeeping missions.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Italy is a destination, transit, and source country for women, children, and men subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Victims originate from Nigeria, Romania, Morocco, China, and other countries. Female victims are often subjected to sex trafficking in Italy after accepting promises of employment as dancers, singers, models, restaurant servers, or caregivers. Romanian and Albanian criminal groups force Eastern European women and girls into commercial sex. Nigerians represent 21 percent of victims, with numbers nearly doubling in 2016 to approximately 7,500 victims. Nigerian women and girls are subjected to sex and labor trafficking through debt bondage and coercion through voodoo rituals. Men from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe are subjected to forced labor through debt bondage in agriculture in southern Italy and in construction, house cleaning, hotels, and restaurants in the north. Chinese men and women are forced to work in textile factories in Milan, Prato, Rome, and Naples. Children subjected to sex trafficking, forced begging, and forced criminal activities are from Romania, Nigeria, Brazil, Morocco, and Italy, particularly Romani and Sinti boys who may have been born in Italy. Transgender individuals from Brazil and Argentina are subjected to sex trafficking in Italy. Unaccompanied children are at risk of trafficking, particularly boys from Somalia, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Afghanistan, who often work in shops, bars, restaurants, and bakeries to repay smuggling debts. Italian men engage in child sex tourism abroad, including in countries across Africa, Latin America, and East Asia.

The estimated number of trafficking victims in Italy increased significantly due to the continued dramatic flow of migrants and asylum-seekers arriving by boat from sub-Saharan Africa. Italy received 181,436 irregular arrivals by sea in 2016, added to the 154,000 arrivals in 2015. More than one-half requested asylum, demonstrating possible vulnerability to trafficking. One international organization estimated more than 7,500 likely trafficking victims arrived from Nigeria alone in 2016, compared to an estimated 2,800 in 2015. Most rely on smugglers at some point during their journey and in some instances are subjected to human trafficking en route or upon arrival in Italy. Although the government operated temporary centers throughout the country to house asylum-seekers, the system was stretched beyond capacity; international organizations reported increased incidents of labor and sex trafficking of asylum-seekers as a result of the reception centers being unsuited for victims of trafficking and too accessible to traffickers who recruit victims. A shortage of shelters also resulted in less capacity to adequately monitor conditions. Under Italian law, asylum-seekers are not allowed to work while their applications are under review, and migrants often sought illegal employment in informal sectors, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. Of total arrivals in 2016, 25,846 were unaccompanied children, mostly boys and a majority from Africa. Many went north to other European countries, while others looked for employment outside protected shelters. Children remaining in Italy were particularly vulnerable to trafficking in the informal agriculture, hospitality, and construction sectors, or were forced by traffickers into begging.

Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country ▼

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

Countries

- [Italy](#)

Topics

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