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TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

JULY 2022



address sub-agents existed, SLBFE did not have the legal authority to regulate sub-agents, which officials recognized contributed to trafficking. The government continued to seek approval for an amendment to the Foreign Employment Act to address the oversight of sub-agents and the investigative authority of MFE officials, including SLBFE.

The government did not report efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. NCPA continued awareness campaigns targeted to parents and children on child abuse, including child sex tourism, in Sri Lanka's Coastal Belt. The government did not report efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism, although the government worked with civil society and an international organization to research causes of sex tourism in Sri Lanka. Foreign tourism has remained low since 2020. The NCPA continued to run a hotline to report child abuse and expanded its services to include online support for referrals via email and text messages. The hotline received 79 reports of alleged child trafficking from April to October 2021, with police investigating the referrals. SLBFE conducted anti-trafficking trainings for personnel at 16 diplomatic missions, and the Foreign Ministry held anti-trafficking trainings in missions facilitating significant labor migration. The government continued to provide anti-trafficking training to its troops prior to their deployment as peacekeepers.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Sri Lanka, and traffickers exploit victims from Sri Lanka abroad. The majority of Sri Lankan trafficking cases involve traffickers forcing Sri Lankan migrant workers into labor overseas. Traffickers exploit Sri Lankan men, women, and children in forced labor in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the United States in the construction, garment, and domestic service sectors. Approximately 1.5 million Sri Lankans work in the Middle East, predominately in construction and domestic work, as well as in professional services. The majority of Sri Lankan female migrant workers seek employment in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Japan, and South Korea, and authorities have identified labor trafficking victims among these workers. Over the past five years, thousands of Sri Lankan female migrant workers—especially from Nuwara Eliya, Ampara, and Batticaloa—reported employers exploited them in forced labor in domestic work in the Gulf. Before leaving Sri Lanka, many migrant workers accumulate debt to pay high recruitment fees imposed by unscrupulous labor recruitment agencies—most of them members of Sri Lanka's association of licensed foreign employment agencies—and their unlicensed sub-agents. For labor trafficking in domestic work, some traffickers target Sri Lankan women with existing debts and use promises of a large advance to defraud them into accepting positions. Some Sri Lankan migrant workers in the Gulf report employers retained their identity documents, including passports and work permits, which restricts freedom of movement and is a common means of coercion for labor and sex trafficking. Some recruitment agencies commit fraud by changing the agreed upon job, employer, conditions, or salary after the worker's arrival. Some recruitment agencies lure workers with promises of work abroad but send them with fraudulent or incorrect documents—including tourist visas instead of work visas—so victims are subject to penalization, including jail time and deportation, if they seek assistance abroad. An international organization reported in 2019 that sub-agents colluded with officials to procure fake or falsified travel documents to facilitate travel of Sri Lankans abroad. According to 2018 media reporting, at least six government-licensed recruitment agencies in Sri Lanka admitted that, if prospective Middle Eastern employers request, they force female migrant workers to take contraceptives before departure to provide a "three-month guarantee" maids will not become pregnant after arrival. Per the same 2018 reporting, sources alleged this was also used to cover up sexual exploitation by recruitment agents and employers, including sex trafficking. Traffickers have forced Sri Lankan women into commercial sex in South and Southeast Asian countries, among other countries. During the reporting period, traffickers increased their use of social media to fraudulently recruit victims due to pandemic-related restrictions in mobility. Sri Lanka is a transit point for Nepali women subjected to forced labor in the Middle East.

Within Sri Lanka, traffickers exploit men, women, and children in forced labor and sex trafficking, although women, children, ethnic minorities, and older individuals are often most at risk. Ethnic minorities such as the Malayaha Tamils, whose ancestors migrated from India to work

on plantations, continue to experience marginalization and forms of discrimination that heighten vulnerability to trafficking. Traffickers recruit women from rural areas with promises of urban jobs in the hospitality sector, salons, spas, and domestic work but exploit some in forced labor or commercial sex. Due to the pandemic, observers report increasingly unethical labor recruitment practices within the local labor market, especially targeting women, as illegal sub-agent recruiters shift their focus from overseas jobs. The socio-economic impact of the pandemic and related restrictions have contributed to an increase in cybersex crimes and increased the risk of low-income individuals and other vulnerable groups to sex trafficking. One local NGO estimated that cybersex crimes, including sex trafficking, against women and children have increased as much as 300 percent since the onset of the pandemic.

Additionally, observers stated they believe more young women were engaged in commercial sex due to pandemic-related economic hardships. Traffickers reportedly exploit boys and girls in sex trafficking, including in coastal areas for child sex tourism, and in hotels, on beaches, and during annual festivals, though tourism volumes fell substantially due to the pandemic. One report found that many child trafficking victims traveled to coastal tourist locations from Anuradhapura district. Reports allege some hotels allow clients to book "services" with children for child sex tourism, and some hotels use intermediaries to provide their guests with males and females—including children—for commercial sex. In addition to foreign tourists—including from Germany, Russia, India, and the People's Republic of China (PRC)—researchers report significant local demand driving child sex trafficking in country. In recent years, traffickers have subjected women from other Asian countries to sex trafficking in Sri Lanka. Traffickers may have exploited migrant workers brought to Sri Lanka on tourist visas and foreign women in commercial sex in Sri Lanka. In addition, some micro-finance companies targeted women with predatory loans and contracts written in English, resulting in debts that forced women to resort to commercial sex or subject their children to sex trafficking in order to pay off the debt.

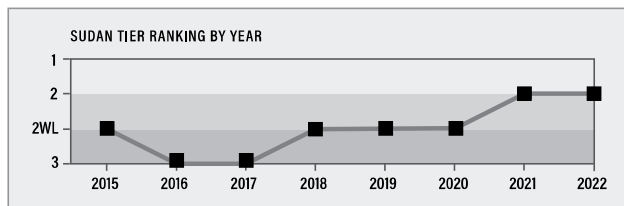
Some observers have long reported that some local government and security sector officials forced women who asked for information about their missing husbands or widows who attempted to claim government benefits from their deceased husbands' military service, to perform commercial sex acts in exchange for information and/or government benefits. Officials and NGOs reported some workers and residents in government and private shelters that care for trafficking victims sexually abused and exploited some of the institutionalized children.

Sri Lankan children work in the domestic sector, service industry, and more hazardous occupations, such as the industrial sector. Child labor is also significant among ethnic minority Tamils on tea and rubber plantations. Some children and women domestic workers in Colombo are subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, non-payment of wages, and restrictions of movement—indicators of labor trafficking. Labor traffickers exploit children in small boutiques and informal markets. Traffickers reportedly exploited children as part of the drug trade in prior years.

SUDAN: TIER 2

The Government of Sudan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Sudan remained on Tier 2. These efforts included convicting more traffickers, updating its national action plan, and providing training on the illegality of child soldier recruitment and use to civilian protection and military forces. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Substantial personnel turnover related to the October 2021 military takeover hindered Sudan's ability to maintain consistent anti-trafficking efforts. Authorities continued to conflate human trafficking with migrant smuggling, hindering law enforcement efforts. For the third consecutive year, the government did not disseminate or implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) for victim identification and referral to care for child trafficking victims developed in partnership

with an international organization. For the third consecutive year, there were allegations officials may have sexually exploited refugees in government-run camps. The government has yet to investigate or prosecute any officials for forced recruitment or use of child soldiers.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers as well as complicit officials, including distinguishing those allegedly responsible for labor and sex trafficking as distinct from migrant smuggling or kidnapping crimes. • Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute officials who were complicit in child soldier recruitment and use. • Coordinate with civil society and international organizations to disseminate and implement SOPs for authorities and first responders to identify child sex and labor trafficking victims and develop SOPs for adult trafficking victims. • Ensure all identified trafficking victims are referred to appropriate protective services. • While respecting fair trial guarantees, sentence convicted traffickers to adequate penalties according to the country's anti-trafficking law. • Increase training for security and judicial officials on distinguishing trafficking from other crimes, such as migrant smuggling and kidnapping for ransom, and ensure recipients use this guidance to train other officials. • Ensure authorities do not penalize trafficking victims for crimes committed as a direct result of unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, such as women coerced into commercial sex acts. • Provide sufficient human and material resources to the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT). • Implement and dedicate adequate resources to the 2021-2023 national anti-trafficking action plan. • Partner with civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to establish additional shelter options for trafficking victims. • Develop a data collection and information management system in collaboration with international organizations to more effectively organize law enforcement data. • Draft and finalize a standalone smuggling law to enhance judicial officials' ability to prosecute migrant smuggling crimes separate from human trafficking crimes.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. The 2014 Anti-Human Trafficking Law, as amended, criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking. The law prescribed between three and 10 years' imprisonment for base offenses involving adult male victims and between five and 20 years' imprisonment for offenses involving adult female and child victims or involving additional aggravating circumstances; these penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Article 14 of the Sudan Armed Forces Act of 2007 criminalized the recruitment of children younger than 18 years old by state armed forces, the enslavement of civilians, sexual slavery, and coercing civilians into prostitution, and it prescribed penalties between three years' imprisonment and death.

Authorities continued to conflate migrant smuggling and human trafficking crimes; thus, the government's reported data likely included cases that did not involve trafficking elements in line with international definitional standards. The government reported investigating 26 cases, involving an unknown number of suspects, compared with an unknown number of cases that involved 118 suspects in the previous reporting period. The government reported prosecuting eight cases, involving an unknown number of suspects, compared with 36 cases involving 80 suspects in the previous reporting period. The government reported convicting 32 traffickers compared with convicting eight defendants of trafficking-related crimes in the previous reporting period. Two additional cases resulted in acquittals, and five cases were dismissed. In prior

years, insufficient sentencing of traffickers weakened deterrence and was not in line with sanctions required by the country's anti-trafficking law. Courts were intermittently closed during the year due to strikes and pandemic restrictions.

The government did not report providing anti-trafficking training to law enforcement, prosecutors, or judges. Authorities continued to conflate human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and kidnapping for ransom, which impeded accurate assessment of Sudan's anti-trafficking law enforcement data. Experts noted the lack of a standalone smuggling law impeded judicial officials' efforts to prosecute migrant smugglers separate from human traffickers. In a previous reporting period, law enforcement officers stated potential foreign victims declining to cooperate with investigators impeded prosecutions of transnational cases.

Authorities did not report the results of investigations into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse—which may have included aspects of sex trafficking, to include transactional sex—by officials from the Commission of Refugees and General Intelligence Services. Experts noted some law enforcement and border officers were complicit in or otherwise profited from trafficking crimes specifically related to exploiting migrants along Sudan's borders. During the reporting period, an international organization reported on the abduction and detention of a girl on a Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) base in sexual slavery for an extended period, which meets the legal standards for recruitment and use of a child soldier by the SAF. The government did not report efforts to investigate complicit officials.

PROTECTION

The government maintained inadequate efforts to identify and protect victims. The government reported identifying 633 potential trafficking victims, 400 men and 233 women, compared with identifying 494 potential victims during the previous reporting period. Due to a dearth of training and ongoing conflation between migrant smuggling and human trafficking, the government did not always distinguish between trafficking victims and individuals who purchased the services of smugglers to cross international borders illegally and were not exploited in forced labor or sex trafficking. The government reported providing food, psycho-social services, and basic medical services at two government-run shelters. The government reported referring an unspecified number of potential victims to shelters. Officials reported existing shelters were in dire need of refurbishment and a dearth of trained mental health professionals to provide care to trafficking victims. The lack of shelters adversely affected the country's ability to protect victims once identified.

For the third consecutive year, officials did not report disseminating or implementing child trafficking victim identification SOPs developed in 2018 in partnership with an international organization. The government did not have SOPs for victim identification and referral to care for adults. The government's past denial of sex trafficking occurring within Sudan, coupled with authorities' inconsistent screening of vulnerable populations, likely resulted in the arrests and detention of women whom traffickers compelled into commercial sex. Sudan's Domestic Workers Act of 2008 provided a legal framework for employing and registering domestic workers with limited labor rights and protections; however, the government did not report registering or protecting any domestic workers under the law during the reporting period.

PREVENTION

The government maintained efforts to prevent trafficking. The NCCHT led the government's anti-trafficking efforts, including implementing the 2021-2023 national action plan, which launched in August. The NCCHT, which included subcommittees in the states of Gedara, Kassala, North and West Darfur, and Northern State, convened regularly. Observers noted that a lack of human and material resources—as well as a limited presence outside the capital—hindered the NCCHT's ability to execute its mandate. The Ministry of Interior's Department of Combating Human Trafficking is responsible for anti-trafficking law enforcement and would provide services to identified trafficking victims, including maintaining one shelter which was in need of repairs.

The government reported it conducted awareness raising campaigns about the 2021 amendments to the anti-trafficking law and the national action plan. Additionally, trafficking was covered in primary

and secondary school curricula. The government provided training to recruitment agencies and prepared informational material on the risks of exploitation for Sudanese seeking work abroad. The government reported it ran a hotline but did not provide information on the hotline's purpose or utility. Ministry of Labor inspectors were responsible for providing oversight of recruitment agencies, but they did not report investigating or sanctioning fraudulent recruiters during the reporting period. The government did not report providing anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel. Officials did not report efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex.

SAF officials continued to staff the Child Rights Unit (CRU), established in 2019, which led the government's child protection efforts in conflict areas. The government reported the CRU provided training focused on the rights of the child in conflict—including sensitization on the illegality of child soldier recruitment and use—to civilian protection and military forces. The government did not report inspecting Rapid Support Forces (RSF) or SAF units to ensure there were no cases of child soldier recruitment or use. For the second consecutive year, the government did not report finalizing the military's training manual on child rights, including child soldier prevention and referral. The Sudanese Joint Chiefs of Staff continued to issue and disseminate command orders every three months during the reporting period, directing military officials to follow the government's ban against recruiting or using individuals younger than 18 years of age in support or combat roles.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Sudan, and traffickers exploit victims from Sudan at home and abroad. Traffickers exploit children experiencing homelessness in Khartoum—including Sudanese and unaccompanied migrant children from West and Central Africa—in forced labor for begging, public transportation, and large markets and in sex trafficking. Business owners, informal mining operators, community members, and farmers exploit children working in brick-making factories, gold mining, collecting medical waste, street vending, and agriculture; the traffickers expose the children to threats, physical and sexual abuse, and hazardous working conditions with limited access to education or health services. Criminal groups exploit Sudanese women and girls—particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs) or those from rural areas—in domestic work and in sex trafficking.

Due to regional instability and conflict, there are more than three million IDPs and 1.1 million refugees in Sudan—populations with increased vulnerability to forced labor or sex trafficking. Observers reported concerns that government officials from the Commission of Refugees and General Intelligence Service were potentially sexually exploiting refugees—including newly arrived Ethiopians—in Sudan. Additionally, due to the government's refugee encampment policy that restricts refugees from moving freely within the country, some refugees utilized migrant smugglers inside Sudan, which further increased their risk of exploitation. Additionally, reports alleged corrupt RSF officials financially benefited from their role as border guards and took a direct role in human trafficking. In past years, the non-governmental armed groups Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) al-Hilu and SPLM-N Malak Aga conscripted child soldiers from refugee camps in South Sudan and brought them into Sudan. The Sudanese Alliance recruited and used child soldiers in Darfur. An international organization reported there were at least 300 child soldiers in Darfur being used by unidentified armed groups.

Sudan is a primary transit point for irregular migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa seeking to reach Europe. Large populations of Eritrean, Ethiopian, and other African asylum-seekers, as well as some Syrians—all populations vulnerable to trafficking due to their economic fragility and lack of access to justice—resided in Khartoum while planning to travel to Europe. Sudanese traffickers compel Ethiopian women to work in private homes in Khartoum and other urban centers. Well-organized and cross-border criminal syndicates force some Ethiopian women into commercial sex in Khartoum by manipulating debts and other forms of coercion. Attempting to escape conflict and poverty, many East African victims of trafficking initially seek out the services of migrant smugglers, who coerce the migrants into forced labor or sex trafficking. Egyptian

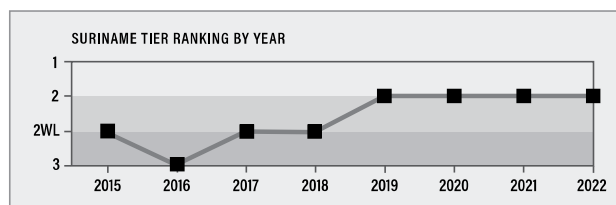
government forces allegedly exploit some Sudanese migrants in forced labor in Egypt. Sudanese transiting the Sinai on their way to Israel are at risk of kidnapping and exploitation by Bedouins and at further risk of trafficking when they arrive in Israel.

Due to the years of conflict in South Sudan, the South Sudanese refugee population in Sudan was more than 800,000 in 2021; many of these refugees remain vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking. In 2018, an international organization documented cases of traffickers exploiting West and Central African nationals—primarily from Chad, Mali, and Niger—arriving in Sudan via irregular migratory routes.

Darfuri armed groups exploit some migrants in forced labor or sex trafficking. Smugglers linked to the Rashaida and Tabo tribes abduct Eritrean nationals at border crossings, extort them for ransom, and subject them to abuse, including trafficking. Other cross-border tribes also force abductees to perform domestic or manual labor and abuse them in other ways, including exploiting them in forced labor or sex trafficking.

SURINAME: TIER 2

The Government of Suriname does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Suriname remained on Tier 2. These efforts included prosecuting more alleged traffickers and doing so for the first time since 2017, prosecuting three police officers for suspected complicity in trafficking crimes, identifying more victims, hiring additional officers for the Police Trafficking in Persons Unit (TIP Unit), implementing a formal victim identification and referral process, adopting a new National Action Plan (NAP), and expanding the interagency Trafficking in Persons Working Group (TIP Working Group). However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Authorities did not convict any traffickers, did not provide adequate services for victims, and did not sufficiently fund anti-trafficking efforts.



PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increase efforts to convict traffickers, following due process, and sentence convicted traffickers to significant prison terms. • Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute alleged traffickers, including officials complicit in trafficking crimes. • Provide vulnerable individuals with trauma-informed assistance, reintegration support, and interpretation in their language prior to, during, and after screening for trafficking. • Provide adequate and dedicated funding for the NAP and government departments carrying out anti-trafficking activities. • Prosecute child sex and labor trafficking cases under the trafficking statute and provide specialized child protection services with trained providers. • Fully implement the victim identification and referral protocol and train officials in its use to identify trafficking victims, especially among at-risk groups. • Train judges at all levels of the judiciary in human trafficking and the trafficking law and sensitize judges and prosecutors to the issue of secondary trauma. • Support NGOs and foreign embassies on victim identification and service provision. • Incorporate survivor input into anti-trafficking policies, develop and execute a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, and publish the results. • Refer to care victims identified through the hotline and report on the hotline's effectiveness.