



2018 Trafficking in Persons Report - Morocco

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 28 June 2018

Cite as United States Department of State, *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report - Morocco*, 28 June 2018, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0ac84.html> [accessed 10 October 2018]

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.

MOROCCO: TIER 2

The Government of Morocco does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Morocco remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by investigating and prosecuting more trafficking cases and convicting slightly more traffickers compared to the previous year – all under the 2016 anti-trafficking law. It also established an inter-ministerial anti-trafficking committee to coordinate anti-trafficking policies and programs across ministries and created a specialized unit to combat trafficking among Moroccans overseas and migrants in the country. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government did not provide or fund specialized protection services specifically for trafficking victims, and did not report screening for trafficking victims, especially among irregular migrants who remained highly vulnerable to trafficking in Morocco. As a result, unidentified victims among vulnerable populations remained at risk of penalization and re-trafficking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOROCCO

Implement the 2017 decree for the National Commission to coordinate anti-trafficking measures and directly train judicial and law enforcement authorities on its application; significantly increase trafficking-related investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers and impose sufficiently stringent sentences; continue to develop and implement procedures for officials to proactively identify and refer trafficking victims, especially among irregular migrants; ensure that victims are not punished for crimes committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking, such as immigration and prostitution violations; provide adequate protection services for trafficking victims and witnesses via funding or in-kind support to NGOs that provide specialized services for victims of all forms of trafficking; develop and systemically implement formal procedures for victim identification and referral to care using a victim-centered approach; address obstacles to integration faced by migrants who face abuse in the security system and elsewhere; and disaggregate the data between human trafficking and migrant smuggling crimes.

PROSECUTION

The government increased its law enforcement efforts. Law 27.14 criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of five to 10 years imprisonment and fines of up to \$53,465, which were sufficiently stringent, and with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with penalties for other serious crimes, such as rape. The law criminalized child trafficking as an aggravated offense, with prescribed penalties of 20 to 30 years' imprisonment and a fine of between \$21,386 and \$213,857. Several pre-existing laws used during the reporting period criminalized some forms of sex and labor trafficking. Generally, penalties under these laws were not sufficiently stringent. Morocco's penal code criminalized forced child labor through article 467-2, which prescribed penalties of one to three years imprisonment, which were not sufficiently stringent. The penal code also criminalized "forced prostitution" and "child prostitution" through articles 497-499, which prescribed penalties of up to 10 years; these penalties were sufficiently stringent and commensurate with

other serious crimes such as rape. Article 10 of Morocco's labor code criminalized forced labor and prescribed penalties of a fine for the first offense and a jail term of up to three months for subsequent offenses; these penalties were not sufficiently stringent. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) reported that proposed amendments to the penal code would expand the definition of the exploitation of children, including defining anyone under 18 (compared with prior age limit of 15) a child, and increased fines and prison sentences for those who exploit children in any way, including as labor; those amendments remained pending at the end of the reporting period.

The media reported that the government investigated a total of 34 potential trafficking cases for calendar year 2017, as compared to 11 in 2016. The government reported prosecution of nine cases involving 20 alleged traffickers and four convictions, compared with four prosecutions and three convictions in 2016. This was the first reporting period for which the government recorded data specifically on trafficking-related arrests and convictions under this law. Among its investigations were eight sub-Saharan migrants for links to trafficking networks, more than 25 beauty salons and massage parlors in Casablanca for suspected trafficking-related crimes, and a journalist on human trafficking and sexual assault charges. The government reported that a U.S. citizen charged in the previous reporting period in a child sex trafficking case will be extradited to the United States for trial. The government reported that two Moroccan peacekeepers accused in 2016 of sexual exploitation were convicted under article 475 and 486 of the penal code for sexual abuse and sentenced to a year of prison and that the case of a third Moroccan peacekeeper accused in 2016 of sexual exploitation was pending. The government did not report the status of the cases of three Saudi Arabian nationals arrested in the same case of child sex trafficking. The government did not report the status of the perpetrators involved in 112 trafficking and migrant smuggling networks dismantled in 2017 or the 29 masterminds, 66 smugglers, and 12 accomplices reported to be involved in 33 trafficking-related criminal networks disbanded in 2016. External sources reported that the government continued to cooperate with Spain to extradite and prosecute international human traffickers, but it was not clear if any traffickers had been extradited by the Moroccan government. The MOJ organized regular training programs on human trafficking for judges and other judicial officials. The government reported training 80 labor inspectors and an unspecified number of security forces on how to identify and protect trafficking victims during the reporting period in addition to training 50 security forces from Guinea on combating trafficking of persons.

The Minister Delegate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Charge of Residents Abroad and Migration Affairs (MDMRAMA) led the implementation of the government's National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum, which included a project to combat trafficking in persons networks through the establishment of a specialized unit to combat trafficking during the reporting period. Through this project, MDMRAMA organized training sessions on the provisions of the anti-trafficking law and immigration, asylum, and trafficking for 185 government officials and security services personnel. The government did not report initiating any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in human trafficking; however, a Bulgarian NGO alleged that a Moroccan diplomat exploited a third-country national in domestic work while posted abroad.

PROTECTION

The government maintained minimal efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims. As in past years, the government remained without a formal process and did not report proactive efforts to identify trafficking victims, including within vulnerable populations such as irregular migrants. The government reported that 16 victims were referred to the MOJ's children and women protection units, and were subsequently provided medical care as needed and referred to NGOs for appropriate specialized assistance. It reported that 10 of the 16 were victims of sex trafficking, one of forced labor, four of forced begging, and one unknown. The government did not report efforts to refer or protect trafficking victims.

The government covered all costs including psychological and medical support, reintegration, and repatriation assistance, including transportation, food, and hospital care as needed, to 426 Moroccans repatriated from Libya, a population vulnerable to trafficking. In partnership with international organizations, the Ministry of Health (MOH) began implementation of a strategic plan to institutionalize care for victims of violence, including foreign migrant women and children, who are vulnerable to trafficking, at reception centers staffed by nurses and social workers at major hospitals, and children/women protection units in Moroccan courts. These hospital-based units provided integrated medical and psychological treatment and social support for an estimated 4,110 child victims of physical violence and 1,130 child victims of sexual

violence in coordination with public partners and civil society in 2016, the most recent period for which data was available; however, the government did not report how many of these children were victims of trafficking. The government also increased the number of child protection centers that offer emergency response and reported that 4,300 children participated in child protection center programs.

While the government remained without a formal victim referral process, both the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development and MOH coordinated with civil society to provide assistance to trafficking victims. Some local law enforcement officials had an ad hoc referral process – utilizing identified contacts at reception centers and a list of NGO service providers that they shared with local and regional authorities as a resource.

The government began an inter-ministerial working group to improve assistance for and protection of trafficking victims, but remained without protection services designed or funded specifically to assist trafficking victims. Civil society organizations continued to be the primary providers of protection services for trafficking victims. The government reportedly continued to encourage victims to cooperate in investigations against their traffickers, but did not report on the number of victims who provided testimony during the reporting period, whether victims received restitution from traffickers, or how witness confidentiality would be protected.

Although the government drastically decreased deportations of migrants over the last couple of years, it continued to conduct forced internal relocations of irregular migrants. As the government remained without a formal victim identification process and made minimal efforts to identify potential trafficking victims among the vulnerable irregular migrant population, victims likely remained unidentified in the law enforcement system and may have been penalized for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, such as immigration and prostitution violations. The government provided legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims of trafficking to countries where they might face retribution or hardship.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent human trafficking. In November 2017, the government finalized a decree to establish a national inter-ministerial anti-trafficking commission as required by the 2016 anti-trafficking law, which remained pending approval by the Councils of Government and Ministers at the end of the reporting period. The National Center for Listening and Reporting received 830 complaints on the exploitation and abuse of children, which may include trafficking crimes. MDMRAMA organized awareness campaigns on the anti-trafficking law for populations vulnerable to trafficking, such as women, children, and migrants, and provided assistance and employment-related trainings to 635 children at risk of human trafficking at professional and vocational training centers. The government implemented new laws during the reporting period prohibiting the employment of domestic workers under the age of 16 and strictly limited the employment of children between the ages of 16 and 18. The government allocated a budget of approximately \$213,860 to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration (MOLVI) to provide support to associations specifically working to combat child labor. Although MOLVI targets sectors and companies more likely to be violating the labor code and exploiting vulnerable persons such as children, the size of the country, scarcity of inspectors, and lack of financial resources limited its ability to monitor and adequately enforce the labor code. There was no national focal point to submit complaints about child labor and no national reciprocal referral mechanism for referring children found during inspections to appropriate social services. While the government provided some financial support to civil society actors who have made progress in child labor issues, service providers were often dependent on expertise and financing from international organizations and foreign donors. Observers have noted that while the government made efforts to protect vulnerable children, many government programs suffered from a lack of qualified personnel and adequate coordination.

The government continued its regularization campaigns to grant legal status and protections including social services, education, and vocational training to migrants and refugees. The government did not make efforts to identify potential trafficking victims among those whose stay was regularized through this program. The government made minimal efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, child sex tourism, and forced labor and reported arresting foreign pedophiles among its efforts. The government provided its diplomatic personnel with human rights training, including respect for labor and trafficking in persons laws,

in their basic courses before being assigned abroad. Moroccan peacekeeping forces received anti-trafficking training and operated under a "no tolerance" standard for its troops involved in UN peacekeeping missions.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Morocco is a source, destination, and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. According to a November 2015 study conducted by the Moroccan government, with support by an international organization, children are exploited in Morocco for labor, domestic work, begging, and sex trafficking. Although the incidence of child domestic workers has reportedly decreased since 2005, girls are recruited from rural areas for work in domestic service in cities and become victims of forced labor. Some Moroccan boys endure forced labor while employed as apprentices in the artisanal and construction industries and in mechanic shops. The 2015 study also found that some Moroccan women are forced into prostitution in Morocco by members of their families or other intermediaries.

Some female undocumented migrants, primarily from Sub-Saharan Africa and a small but growing number from South Asia, are coerced into prostitution and forced labor. Criminal networks operating in Oujda on the Algerian border and in the northern coastal town of Nador force undocumented migrant women into prostitution and begging; networks in Oujda also reportedly force children of migrants to beg. Some female migrants, particularly Nigerians, who transit Oujda are forced into prostitution once they reach Europe. International organizations, local NGOs, and migrants report unaccompanied children and women from Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Cameroon are highly vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor in Morocco. Some reports suggest Cameroonian and Nigerian networks force women into prostitution, while Nigerian networks also force women to beg in the streets by threatening the victims and their families; the victims are typically the same nationality as the traffickers. Some women from the Philippines and Indonesia are recruited for employment as domestic workers in Morocco; upon arrival, some are subjected to forced labor, experiencing non-payment of wages, withholding of passports, and physical abuse at the hands of their employers.

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

Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country

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

Countries

- [Morocco](#)

Topics

- [Survivors of trafficking / Persons at risk of trafficking](#)
- [Trafficking in persons](#)