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2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Chad

CHAD: Tier 2 Watch List

The Government of Chad does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. Officials identified more potential victims and increased efforts to raise public awareness of the crime among the population, addressing a key deficiency in the country's anti-trafficking efforts. The Ministry of Justice legally established its national anti-trafficking committee and designated a focal point to lead the country's human trafficking efforts. However, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity. Authorities did not report investigating, prosecuting, or convicting any confirmed trafficking cases, and the government did not report designating members of or inaugurating its national anti-trafficking committee as required by the country's 2018 law. Therefore Chad remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

While respecting due process, vigorously investigate and prosecute suspected traffickers according to Chad's anti-trafficking Law 006/PR/18. • Sanction convicted traffickers with sentences in accordance with Law 006/PR/18. • Develop formal standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the identification and referral of trafficking victims to medical care; train security services, law enforcement, and civil society to implement the SOPs. • Formally inaugurate and staff the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP) and include civil society, NGOs, and international organizations in its activities. • Draft, finalize, and provide sufficient resources to implement a national action plan to combat trafficking that includes steps to increase the government's ability to prosecute traffickers, identify victims, and prevent the crime through sensitization. • Distinguish between human trafficking and migrant smuggling to reinforce public and government efforts to counter trafficking in persons. • Incorporate human trafficking awareness into basic training for law enforcement and judicial officials, in coordination with international organizations and donors. • Establish a specialized anti-trafficking unit in the Judicial Police to ensure officers effectively investigate suspected trafficking crimes under the country's 2018 trafficking law. • Include trafficking components for all new magistrates and prosecutors attending the Ministry of Justice's training college in N'Djamena. • Increase the provision of shelter and protective services to all trafficking victims, in coordination with NGOs and international organizations. • Beginning in N'Djamena, use local community radio stations to raise public awareness of human trafficking, and incorporate the High Islamic Council, tribal leaders, and other members of the traditional justice system into sensitization campaigns. • Given concerns that Cuba forces its citizens to work abroad in medical missions, screen Cuban medical workers for trafficking indicators and refer them to appropriate services, if exploitative conditions are determined to exist.

PROSECUTION

The government slightly increased overall law enforcement efforts. Law 006/PR/2018 on Combatting Trafficking in Persons criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Article seven of Law 006/PR/2018 prescribed penalties of four to 30 years' imprisonment and a fine of 250,000 to 5 million Central African CFA francs (CFA) (\$470 to \$9,450); these penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.

The Ministry of Justice reported investigating, prosecuting, and convicting three potential traffickers, although officials did not share sufficient information to clarify whether these were cases of forced labor, sexual exploitation, or human smuggling. Observers noted magistrates often do not have access to the internet, electricity, or telephones, making it difficult to compile and report law enforcement data. Courts sanctioned the perpetrators with the following sentences: five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000; five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$200; and 18 months'

imprisonment and a fine of \$200. Experts stated the penalties more closely aligned with the criminal code rather than the 2018 anti-trafficking law. Separate from the three cases shared by the Ministry of Justice, media reported three potential cases, although it was unclear if these were human trafficking or smuggling. During the previous year, the government did not report investigating or prosecuting any trafficking cases; courts reported convicting one trafficker for forcing multiple victims to work in Chad's northern gold mines and sentenced the perpetrator to three years' imprisonment and a 200,000 CFA (\$380) fine. During the reporting period, the pandemic resulted in the Ministry of Justice shuttering courts from March to June and again in January 2021. Observers noted some communities resolved issues—including criminal offenses—through customary, traditional, or Islamic courts as opposed to the codified judicial system.

In February 2021, the Ministry of Justice published a directive to all prosecutors, appeals court presidents, and grand tribunal presidents urging judicial officials to prioritize trafficking cases and to transmit all cases before and after adjudication to the Judicial Affairs Department of the Ministry of Justice. Additionally, officials shared the note with the public via social media.

Authorities did not report investigating, prosecuting, or convicting government workers complicit in human trafficking offenses, despite experts alleging officials were complicit in trafficking crimes. Reports of complicity included government-affiliated security forces profiting from illicit activity such as forced labor in cattle herding throughout the country's rural areas and along its borders, as well as officials forcing prisoners to work on private enterprises separate from their legal sentences. In 2020, the government did not report providing trafficking-specific training for officials; however, the pandemic impeded the government's ability to undertake training initiatives by limiting in-person meetings. The government provided in-kind support for a donor-funded training for 68 law enforcement and judicial officials on the 2018 trafficking law during the previous reporting period.

PROTECTION

The government maintained efforts to protect victims. It identified more potential victims, but other protection efforts remained minimal; officials did not report identifying victims during the previous reporting period. Authorities did not screen proactively for trafficking indicators. Officers from Chad's G-5 Sahel Joint Force battalion—stationed in Tibesti Province in the country's north—identified 19 potential child victims during a February 2021 operation, although these children may have been associated with smuggling clients. The Ministry of Women, Family, and National Solidarity provided shelter and basic care to the 19 children. Additionally, the National Committee of Human Rights investigated allegations of human trafficking in Bitkine province and reported returning four potential victims to their families in January 2021.

The government remained without comprehensive written victim identification and referral procedures to guide front line officials. NCCTIP policy directed officials to refer suspected child trafficking cases to Child Protection Brigade officers—who investigate and report cases to the Ministry of Justice—and refer cases involving adult victims to police; the government did not report referring any cases during the reporting period.

Law enforcement coordinated with the country's leading anti-trafficking NGO, although the government did not provide material support to the NGO during the year. The Ministry of Women, Family, and National Solidarity, in partnership with an international organization and local NGOs continued to operate transit centers that served as temporary shelters throughout the country. The shelters provided temporary housing, food, and education to victims of gender-based violence and other crimes, including potential victims of trafficking. Officials did not report providing services to trafficking victims in these shelters during the reporting period. Privately run orphanages may have provided assistance to child victims of trafficking, although these organizations did not provide statistics. Services continued to be limited to urban areas and were largely inaccessible to much of Chad's rural population.

The government did not have a formal policy to offer temporary or permanent residency for foreign victims of trafficking and did not report identifying any foreign victims. While there were no reports the government penalized any trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, authorities may have arrested some victims due to the lack of formal victim identification and referral procedures, as well as officials' limited understanding of the crime. While the pandemic did not significantly alter the minimal availability of services offered to victims, its adverse economic impacts affected the government's budgets and corresponding ability to refer personnel for the country's social services.

PREVENTION

The government maintained efforts to prevent trafficking, and high-level support for anti-trafficking efforts improved slightly. Law 06/PR/2018 designated the NCCTIP as the lead entity on addressing trafficking. In February 2021, the Minister of Justice signed decree 151/MJCDH/2021 legally

establishing the NCCTIP with 25 members representing 21 different entities, including three positions designated for civil society representatives. Also in February, the Ministry of Justice designated a single focal point on TIP matters. However, the government did not officially inaugurate or staff the NCCTIP before the end of the reporting period. The government did not develop a national action plan in 2020, which hindered coordination efforts during the reporting period. The pandemic's deleterious impact on government budgets and government operations – coupled with falling oil prices – impeded authorities' implementation of trafficking initiatives. The government did not independently research trafficking in Chad, exacerbating a general lack of understanding of the issue in the country.

During the reporting period, officials promoted sensitization campaigns leveraging radio and social media, and they highlighted arrests of suspected traffickers to the press, NGOs, and the diplomatic community. The government collaborated with the radio show Know Your Rights (*Connaitre Vos Droits*) in an October broadcast, featuring the Minister of Justice and the director of the National Commission on Human Rights, to encourage public dialogue around human trafficking. Authorities did not disclose implementing any awareness-raising activities during the previous reporting period.

The government continued to make no discernible efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex during the reporting period. A lack of identity documentation remained a risk factor for trafficking in Chad, and the government did not share whether it continued to implement the 2013 birth registration policy requiring universal issuances of uniform birth certificates. The government did not provide anti-trafficking training to its troops prior to their deployment as peacekeepers. Authorities did not provide anti-trafficking training or guidance for its diplomatic personnel.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Chad, and traffickers exploit Chadian victims abroad. Human trafficking remains a primarily internal phenomenon. Families frequently entrust their children to relatives or intermediaries to receive education, apprenticeship, goods, or money; some of those relatives or intermediaries subsequently force or coerce the children to work in domestic service or cattle herding. Individuals associated with small- and medium-scale enterprises force children to beg in urban areas and exploit them as agricultural laborers on farms, in northern gold mines and charcoal production, and as domestic workers across the country. In the Lake Chad region, community members exploit some children in catching, smoking, and selling fish. Elders of some traditional Quranic schools known as *mouhadjirin* coerce children from small rural villages into begging, street vending, or other forced labor throughout the country.

Cattle herders force some children to work along traditional routes for grazing cattle and, at times, cross ill-defined international borders into Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Nigeria. Traffickers in rural areas sell children in markets for use in cattle or camel herding. In some cases, military or local government officials exploit with impunity child herders in forced labor. Additionally, experts allege officials force prisoners to work on private enterprises separate from their legal sentences. Criminal elements exploit some rural Chadian girls who travel to larger towns in search of work in child sex trafficking or domestic servitude. According to observers, Chadian mercenaries recruited to Libya to take up arms in the conflict facilitated human trafficking.

Chad hosts approximately 930,000 refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees, and asylum seekers as of February 2021; these populations may be vulnerable to trafficking—including adult and child sexual exploitation—based on their economic instability and lack of access to support systems. While many individuals crossing clandestinely into Libya for economic reasons initially used the services of smugglers, traffickers exploit some of these irregular migrants in commercial sex or forced labor. The Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram and the terrorist organization ISIS-West Africa forcibly abducted children to serve as child soldiers, suicide bombers, child brides, and forced laborers. Community-based armed groups tasked with defending people and property in rural areas likely recruit and use children in armed conflict. Cuban nationals working in Chad on medical missions may have been forced to work by the Cuban government.

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Austrian Red Cross Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)	Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583 F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589 info@ecoi.net	Contact Imprint & Disclaimer F.A.Q. Data Protection Notice
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