

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	157
Land:	Rwanda
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Trafficking in Persons Report 2017
Udgivet:	27. juni 2017
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. september 2017

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
USDOS - US Department of State
- **Title:**
Trafficking in Persons Report 2017 - Country Narratives - Rwanda
- **Publication date:**
27 June 2017
- **ecoi.net summary:** Annual report on trafficking in persons (covering April 2016 to March 2017) [ID 342581]
- **Countries:**
Rwanda
- **Original link** <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271270.htm>

Recommended citation:

USDOS - US Department of State: Trafficking in Persons Report 2017 - Country Narratives - Rwanda, 27 June 2017 (available at ecoi.net)

http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/342581/473357_en.html (accessed 16 September 2017)



Trafficking in Persons Report 2017 - Country Narratives - Rwanda

RWANDA: Tier 2 Watch List

The Government of Rwanda does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated significant efforts during the reporting period by prosecuting and convicting perpetrators of cross-border trafficking crimes, identifying and referring trafficking victims to some protection services, providing assistance to some former child combatants, and continuing to implement anti-trafficking awareness campaigns and other prevention measures. The government also issued new ministerial guidelines on the civilian nature of all refugee camps in close collaboration with an international organization, which clarify criminal penalties for trafficking and recruitment in the camps. In contrast to the previous year, there were no credible reports of Rwandan government involvement in either the recruitment into armed groups or sexual exploitation of refugees. However, the government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. The government did not investigate, prosecute, or convict any trafficking offenders for internal trafficking crimes, despite the presence of sex trafficking and forced labor within the country. The government did not investigate credible allegations in 2015 that some Rwandan security and military officials were complicit in facilitating the recruitment of Burundian refugees, including children, into armed groups, and it did not hold criminally accountable Rwandan defense forces (RDF) soldiers and refugee camp staff for allegedly facilitating the sexual exploitation of Congolese child refugees in 2015. Refugee whistleblowers from 2015 reported ongoing harassment by officials from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) in retaliation for reporting protection concerns in camps. The government did not adequately screen for trafficking victims among individuals at government centers that serve vulnerable populations, and observers stated these centers, which the government claimed were for rehabilitation, functioned as de facto detention facilities. Therefore, Rwanda remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RWANDA

Proactively investigate, prosecute, and convict perpetrators of forced labor and sex trafficking, including officials and individuals involved in sex trafficking and recruitment and use of refugees into armed groups; implement protection measures for Rwanda's refugee population, and effectively train all MIDIMAR and security officials to identify, screen for, and protect trafficking victims among refugees; systematically identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, and ensure potential and identified victims are not arrested, detained, or punished for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking; provide appropriate long-term protection services, including shelter and psychosocial care, for all trafficking victims, both foreign and domestic; cooperate with NGOs and international organizations to proactively identify and refer victims to adequate protection services; continue training of law enforcement, judicial officials, labor inspectors, and social workers on the

implementation of trafficking laws and victim identification procedures; and continue to implement anti-trafficking awareness campaigns.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. It continued to combat cross-border trafficking crimes, but did not investigate internal trafficking crimes nor did it hold criminally accountable government officials who were allegedly complicit in 2015 of sex trafficking and the recruitment of Burundian refugees, including children, into armed groups. Rwanda's penal code criminalizes human trafficking under a variety of articles, mostly in chapter 8. This chapter, in combination with forced labor articles and other provisions of law, covers almost all forms of trafficking, but also includes crimes that are not defined as trafficking under the UN Palermo Protocol. Chapter 8 prescribes penalties of seven to 10 years imprisonment and financial penalties for internal trafficking, and up to 15 years imprisonment for transnational trafficking. Child trafficking convictions are subject to a minimum five-year prison term, while slavery convictions carry three- to 12-year prison terms. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child outlaws child sex and labor trafficking and slavery under article 51.

During the reporting period, the government initiated an unknown number of trafficking investigations of alleged perpetrators from Burundi, Uganda, Germany, and Kenya. The national public prosecution authority (NPPA) reported initiating 44 cases of cross-border trafficking between July 2015 and October 2016—a 15-month timeframe of which only five months are in the reporting period; of these cases, it prosecuted 16, while 16 cases were dismissed and 12 remained pending at the end of this reporting period. The government convicted seven traffickers during the specified timeframe, but it did not report the sentences or the laws under which these offenders were convicted. During the previous 12-month reporting period, the government reported 19 potential cases of human trafficking and three convictions under anti-trafficking provisions. In 2016, the government did not prosecute or convict any perpetrators of internal sex trafficking or forced labor, despite the prevalence of trafficking within the country. For example, in August 2016 the Rwandan national police (RNP) arrested and investigated a hotel owner for allegedly forcing four female employees to provide commercial sex to the hotel's customers; however, authorities dropped the case due to insufficient corroborating evidence and released the alleged perpetrator in September 2016 despite the four victims proactively pursuing criminal charges. The government admitted difficulty prosecuting and convicting trafficking offenders due to a lack of investigative and prosecutorial anti-trafficking knowledge, extensive trafficking networks, and lack of victim testimony.

The government did not hold complicit officials accountable for alleged trafficking offenses that occurred in 2015, despite credible allegations of such complicity. During the reporting period, the government continued to deny credible allegations that security and military officials were complicit in facilitating the coerced recruitment of Burundian refugees, including children, in 2015. Moreover, the government did not hold criminally accountable RDF soldiers and refugee camp staff for allegedly facilitating the sexual exploitation of Congolese child refugees in 2015; after conducting an internal investigation, the government relieved two RDF soldiers and other camp staff officials of their duties, but did not prosecute or adequately punish any civilian or military officials for these alleged crimes. The government continued the investigation of three RNP officers serving as peacekeepers in Haiti, who were cited in the UN Secretary-General's 2016 report on sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians by international peacekeepers. All three were paternity cases arising from inappropriate relationships with adult victims. The officers were placed on administrative duty and not allowed to perform police duties while under investigation. The RNP fully cooperated with the UN-led investigation, which was pending confirmation of paternity by the UN at the end of the reporting period.

As in the previous reporting period, the RNP continued to operate a 15-officer anti-trafficking unit within its INTERPOL directorate. The RNP directorate for anti-gender-based violence (GBV) also continued to designate three officers in each of the country's 78 police stations to serve as points of contact for domestic trafficking victims; six judicial police officers specialized in victim identification remained in each of Rwanda's police stations. The government continued to provide anti-trafficking training as a part of standard training and professional development for immigration officers, police, labor inspectors, judicial officials, and social workers. The NPPA also trained 60 prosecutors and judicial police on investigation and prosecuting trafficking crimes.

PROTECTION

The government maintained protection efforts. It continued to identify and refer to services some trafficking victims; however, it did not provide protection services specifically catered to the needs of trafficking victims as distinct from victims of other crimes, nor did it protect vulnerable populations from punishment for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. During the reporting period, MIDIMAR and RNP continued efforts to ensure security at refugee camps and better register the arrival and departure of refugees, in response to allegations of the recruitment of child and adult refugees to fight for Burundian armed groups. Despite this effort, MIDIMAR officials continued to discourage Burundian refugees from reporting protection concerns in the camp; some whistleblower refugees from 2015 reported ongoing harassment by MIDIMAR staff throughout the reporting period in reprisal for reporting their concerns. The government continued to operate transit and vocational training centers intended to

rehabilitate street children, women in prostitution, and individuals detained for crimes committed as a direct result of trafficking. Following NGO reports of abuse at the centers, the government adopted guidelines for improving conditions at the centers. However, advocacy groups continued to report that the centers operated without judicial oversight and functioned as de facto detention facilities in which individuals held were not adequately screened for trafficking, were held for arbitrary periods of time, and were at times subjected to physical or sexual abuse.

Law enforcement and immigration officials identified approximately 60 trafficking victims in 2016, which included 28 Rwandan victims repatriated from Burundi and 15 female Burundian trafficking victims identified at a border-crossing. This compares to 25 victims identified in 2015. The government continued to provide victim identification guidelines to law enforcement and immigration officials, and social workers in victim centers also used guidelines to identify and assist trafficking victims. NGOs reported insufficient coordination among ministries and lack of collaboration with civil society hindered the government's ability to identify and assist trafficking victims. In one case, the government did not refer to protective services four potential sex trafficking victims after the RNP arrested a hotel owner for allegedly forcing these women to engage in commercial sex with hotel clients. The government's 28 "one-stop" centers located in hospitals and district capitals provided various psychosocial services to GBV and trafficking victims. According to international organizations, the provision of these services was insufficient due to funding shortfalls. The government referred the 28 Rwandan trafficking victims to these centers in 2016 for assistance and local authorities worked with victims to reintegrate them into their communities. The RNP also operated four additional safe houses where foreign trafficking victims could be temporarily housed prior to repatriation, and the RNP housed 15 Burundian victims at these facilities during the reporting period. The NPPA continued to operate four safe houses for witnesses in criminal cases, which could include trafficking victims; however, in 2016—as in 2014 and 2015—the government did not place trafficking victims in these safe houses. The national commission for children (NCC) reported it removed 2,000 children from exploitative labor in agriculture and construction sectors during the reporting period, but it did not report screening them for indicators of trafficking or what assistance—if any—the children received after removal. In 2016, the government assisted approximately 30 children in a rehabilitation center for former child combatants associated with armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which provided psycho-social support, education, and reintegration services. The government reportedly encouraged victims to testify against perpetrators, but officials noted participation of victims in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers continued to be a challenge. Rwandan law does not provide foreign trafficking victims with legal alternatives to their removal to a country where they may face hardship or retribution; however, in practice, the government made efforts not to deport foreign victims who faced retribution in their home country.

PREVENTION

The government maintained efforts to prevent trafficking. In response to 2015 allegations that some officials were complicit in facilitating the coerced recruitment of Burundian adult and child refugees out of camps, the government—in collaboration with UNHCR—adopted ministerial guidelines in June 2016 that prohibit refugees from participating in military training and outline punishments for perpetrators of GBV, organized prostitution, and human trafficking crimes in refugee camps. MIDIMAR also partnered with the UN to carry out a gender assessment in all refugee camps to identify measures to mitigate the risks of trafficking and GBV. International organizations and NGOs reported that insufficient coordination among government agencies and resource constraints continued to hinder the government's anti-trafficking efforts. The government continued to implement its 2014-2017 national anti-trafficking action plan, and in June 2016 parliament held a public consultative meeting to address human trafficking and other crimes and adopt future measures to prevent trafficking. The government's interagency anti-trafficking working group met quarterly in 2016. Throughout the reporting period, the government conducted multiple national and local awareness raising anti-trafficking campaigns in schools and community events, as well as on television and radio. Despite these awareness-raising efforts, these campaigns focused primarily on transnational trafficking and did not adequately address domestic sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, and forced child labor. RNP continued to operate a national GBV hotline, which was staffed by social workers trained to identify and refer trafficking cases, which reportedly identified an unspecified number of victims in 2016.

The government made efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor, commercial sex acts, and child sex tourism. The government continued an awareness campaign to discourage men from paying for commercial sex and requiring men who were arrested for buying commercial sex acts to perform community service and receive education on women's rights. The government reported closing two labor recruitment agencies in 2016, but it reported that it had difficulty prosecuting and convicting recruiters who fraudulently recruited workers. The government continued to train labor inspectors on identifying and handling child labor cases, including forced child labor. The government continued to work in partnership with an international NGO to remove children from child labor, including exploitative child labor, in the agriculture and construction sectors. During the reporting period, the government partnered with an international organization to train a corps of approximately 30,000 village-level community volunteers to address child protection issues, including child labor. The government trained all Rwandan troops on gender sensitivity, human rights, and trafficking prior to their deployment to UN peacekeeping missions abroad. The government provided anti-trafficking training for all its diplomatic personnel; diplomats were also required to identify and assist the repatriation of Rwandan trafficking victims abroad.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Rwanda is a source, transit, and to a lesser extent, destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Rwandan girls and boys are exploited in domestic service through extended family networks; some of these children experience physical or sexual abuse and non-payment of wages. Rwandan girls and some boys, some of whom are secondary school students between the ages of 13 to 18, are exploited in commercial sex in hotels, at times through the facilitation of hotel owners. Local human rights groups reported in 2016 that some Rwandan girls in domestic work, who become pregnant and thereby terminated by their employers and unable to return to their home villages, are subsequently exploited in sex trafficking. Some Rwandan men, women, and children are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in domestic work and agricultural and industrial sectors in destinations around the world; the primary destinations for Rwandan victims are Uganda, the DRC, and other parts of East Africa. Rwandan victims are also reportedly exploited in domestic servitude in the Middle East and sex trafficking in China. In previous years, Rwandan victims were exploited in South Africa, Malaysia, the United States, and Europe. In 2016, some Rwandan girls were forced into marriages with men in Tanzania and may have experienced commercial sexual exploitation through these marriages. Reporting in 2013 indicated Kampala- and Nairobi-based labor recruiters and brokers recruited Rwandan workers through fraudulent offers of employment abroad and subjected them to sex trafficking and forced labor in agriculture and domestic work.

Refugees fleeing conflict and political violence in Burundi and the DRC remained highly vulnerable to trafficking in Rwanda or are subjected to exploitation in third countries after transiting Rwanda. According to an international organization, there has been an increase in sex trafficking of Burundian male and female teenagers through Rwanda to third countries since 2015. Since April 2015, approximately 85,000 Burundian refugees fled to Rwanda. In 2015, Burundian refugee girls transited through Rwanda and were exploited in sex trafficking in Uganda; some of these girls may also be subjected to domestic servitude in Uganda. Separately, female child refugees in a Congolese refugee camp were reportedly subjected to sex trafficking in nearby towns in 2015, allegedly facilitated by one civilian and three RDF soldiers assigned to the camp.

Between May and September 2015, Burundian refugees residing in Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda were recruited into non-state armed groups supporting the Burundian opposition; Rwandan security forces charged to protect the camp population reportedly facilitated or tolerated the recruitment activity. Whistleblower refugees in 2015 alleged that recruiters—including both Rwandan officials and other refugees—threatened, intimidated, harassed, and physically assaulted those who refused recruitment attempts. Most recruits were adult males, but in three verified cases, Burundian refugee children were also identified as recruits from Mahama refugee camp. Refugees reported Burundian recruits, including women and children, were trained in weaponry by Rwandan military personnel at a training camp in southwestern Rwanda. There were no reports of forcible or coerced recruitment out of Mahama refugee camp by Rwandan government officials in 2016.

published on

