

USDOS – US Department of State

2022 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. These efforts included investigating trafficking cases and finalizing a one-year National Action Plan (NAP) for 2021-2022. The government, in collaboration with an international organization, finalized and began implementation of its standard operating procedures (SOPs) and a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victim identification and referral to care. However, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity. Substantial personnel turnover related to the April 2021 death of the former President and subsequent formation of the transition government hindered Chad's ability to maintain consistent anti-trafficking efforts and accurately report on those efforts for this reporting period. Authorities did not report prosecuting or convicting any traffickers and did not report identifying any trafficking victims. The government did not report conducting any awareness campaigns. Because the government has devoted sufficient resources to a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute significant efforts to meet the minimum standards, Chad was granted a waiver per the Trafficking Victims Protection Act from an otherwise required downgrade to Tier 3. Therefore Chad remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the third consecutive year.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- While respecting due process, increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, including complicit officials, and adequately sentence convicted traffickers.
- Train officials to use the SOPs and NRM for victim identification and referral to care and proactively identify trafficking victims, including among vulnerable populations such as Cuban healthcare professionals and People's Republic of China (PRC) nationals employed at worksites affiliated with the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative. Formally inaugurate and staff the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP) and include civil society in its activities.
- Provide specific anti-trafficking training to law enforcement officials to improve case investigation and victim identification and referral to appropriate care and training on the distinctions between human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
- 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 anti-trafficking training 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.
- Implement and consistently enforce strong regulations and oversight of labor recruitment companies and hold fraudulent labor recruiters criminally accountable.
- 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.
- Establish a mechanism for the collection or storage of anti-trafficking law enforcement data.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased overall law enforcement efforts. Law 006/ PR/2018 on Combatting Trafficking in Persons criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Article 7 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) (\$432 to \$8,650); 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 initiating the investigation of 41 alleged labor traffickers during the reporting period. The government did not report any prosecutions or convictions of traffickers. This compared with investigating, prosecuting, and convicting three traffickers in the previous reporting period. Observers noted magistrates often do not have access to the internet, electricity, or telephones, making it difficult to compile and report law enforcement data. Observers noted some communities resolved issues—including criminal offenses—through traditional or Islamic courts as opposed to the codified judicial system.

The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking crimes; however, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns, hindering law enforcement action during the year. Reports of complicity from previous reporting periods 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 being served. Observers reported some local government officials and security forces may cover up allegations of trafficking crimes or not pursue cases to protect suspected traffickers, and reported complicit officials intimidate victims from pursuing criminal cases. In September 2021, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with an international organization, conducted anti-trafficking trainings for judicial officials in N'Djamena and Moussoro.

PROTECTION

The government maintained insufficient efforts to protect victims. Authorities did not report identifying any potential trafficking victims, compared with 19 potential victims identified in the previous reporting period. An international organization reported the Chadian Special Anti-Terrorism Unit (DGSAT) intercepted 23 potential child trafficking victims in northern Chad and referred them to care. The Association for the Reintegration of Children and the Defense of Human Rights (ARED) reported 60 complaints of potential human trafficking through its 20 focal points nationwide. Additionally, local NGOs identified 48 labor trafficking victims (all boys younger than the age of 18) and referred them to care. Authorities did not proactively screen vulnerable populations for trafficking indicators. In September 2021, the government, in collaboration with an international organization, finalized and began implementation of SOPs and an NRM for victim identification and referral to care.

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. These transit centers 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 facilities during the reporting period. Privately-run orphanages may have provided assistance to child trafficking victims, although these organizations did not report details. 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. Due to limited use of the new formal identification procedures, authorities may have arrested, detained, and penalized some unidentified victims.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent trafficking. Law 06/PR/2018 designated NCCTIP as the government's inter-ministerial entity to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts, and in February 2021, the Minister of Justice signed a decree formally establishing the NCCTIP. However, the government did not officially inaugurate or staff the NCCTIP by the end of the reporting period. In July 2021, the Minister of Justice launched a Multisectoral Technical Committee (MTC) to conduct the government's anti-trafficking activities in the interim. The government implemented its 2021-2022 anti-trafficking NAP and allocated resources to implement the plan. In September 2021, the Ministry of Justice in collaboration with an international organization, trained local media organizations on the trafficking in persons law and how to accurately cover human trafficking cases in their reporting. The pandemic's deleterious impact on government budgets, as well as overall operations, impeded authorities' implementation of anti-trafficking initiatives.

The government did not report conducting or contributing in-kind resources for any awareness-raising activities during the reporting period. National radio stations such as FM Liberté (FM Liberty) continued to raise awareness on human trafficking. Observers reported high illiteracy rates among the population hindered the government's ability to increase awareness of human trafficking.

The government had laws and regulations on labor recruitment; however, the government did not conduct inspections or screen intending migrants for trafficking indicators in the labor recruitment process. The government ratified the International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in February 2022 to increase protections for migrant workers. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. A lack of identity documentation remained a risk factor for trafficking in Chad, and the government did not report whether it continued to implement the 2013 birth registration policy requiring universal issuances of uniform birth certificates. The government, in collaboration with a foreign donor, provided anti-trafficking training to some of its troops prior to their deployment as peacekeepers. Authorities did not provide anti-trafficking training 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. Families frequently entrust their children to relatives or intermediaries to receive education, apprenticeship, goods, or money; some relatives or intermediaries subsequently force or coerce 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 forms of 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 more than one million refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers as of January 2022; these populations may be vulnerable to trafficking 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. Terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISIS-WA) 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. PRC nationals employed in Chad at worksites affiliated with the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative may have been vulnerable to forced labor. Cuban nationals working in Chad on medical missions may have been forced to work by the Cuban government.

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