

An official website of the United States Government [Here's how you know](#)

Newsroom

Business 

Employees

Job Seekers

Students

Travelers

Visas

Menu

[Home](#) > ... > France

2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: France

OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Share

IN THIS SECTION

FRANCE: Tier 1

The Government of France fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore France remained on Tier 1. These efforts included increasing its funding to one NGO that provided victim protection assistance, providing assistance to more victims than the prior year, and increasing efforts to address official complicity. The government also established a new inter-ministerial working group on child sex trafficking. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it prosecuted fewer suspects and convicted fewer traffickers compared to the prior year, which could not be attributed to the pandemic. For the second year, the government did not report investigating any traffickers, and it did not report sufficiently disaggregated data on the number of trafficking victims it identified. The government continued to lack a national victim identification and referral mechanism to ensure proactive referral to care; it lacked coordinated and comprehensive data on trafficking; and it did not increase its

efforts to address labor trafficking. Police continued to arrest and prosecute child victims of forced begging and forced criminality and deport irregular migrants from Mayotte, an overseas French department, without screening for trafficking indicators. Further, the government again did not take steps to address the 3,000 to 4,000 unaccompanied Comorian children at risk for sex and labor trafficking in Mayotte.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Coordinate and centralize the timely collection of trafficking data across the government, including sufficiently disaggregating data between trafficking and other forms of exploitation, as well as between sex and labor trafficking. • Create a national identification and referral mechanism for all forms of trafficking and increase efforts to proactively identify and provide assistance to trafficking victims in all regions and departments, both domestic and overseas. • Vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, and sentence those convicted to significant prison terms. • Increase funding and resources specifically for anti-trafficking coordination and victim assistance, including adequate funding for NGOs providing assistance. • Increase interagency coordination to investigate and prevent labor trafficking. • Ensure adequate training for law enforcement investigators on techniques to dismantle human trafficking organizations operating on the internet and other technologies. • Systematically train all front-line officials, including labor inspectors, police, prosecutors, and judges, on a victim-centered approach to investigating and prosecuting labor trafficking and identifying victims. • Vigorously investigate labor trafficking and prosecute these crimes as trafficking rather than labor code violations. • Allow formal victim identification without requiring cooperation or interaction with law enforcement and by entities other than law enforcement officials, including by civil society, social workers, and healthcare professionals. • Consistently screen all migrants for trafficking indicators, including unaccompanied children in Mayotte. • Implement the second national action plan and include a defined timeframe and dedicated budget as well as other recommendations from the national rapporteur. • Provide adequate resources for child victims, including improving the quality of shelters and specialized assistance, especially of forced begging and criminality. • Increase efforts to award restitution to all victims of trafficking and ensure victims lacking legal status were eligible to receive restitution and damages. • Offer the reflection period to all victims, including migrants and victims of forced begging

and criminality. • Strengthen international law enforcement cooperation to prevent and investigate child sex tourism and continue to prosecute and convict perpetrators. • Ensure sufficient resources are provided to the national rapporteur and the anti-trafficking coordinator. • Utilize the witness protection program for trafficking victims and improve assistance provided during court trials. • Increase worker protections by eliminating recruitment or placement fees charged to workers by French labor recruiters and ensuring employers pay any recruitment fees. • Given significant concerns about forced labor indicators in Cuban Medical Missions, screen Cuban medical professionals in all regions and departments and refer them to appropriate services. • Establish adequate accommodation centers dedicated to adult male trafficking victims that take into account the specific needs of these trafficking victims.

PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts. Article 225-4 of the penal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to €1.5 million (\$1.84 million). These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. The increased occurrence of other crimes, notably domestic violence, during the pandemic lockdowns caused a shift in government priorities and resources away from human trafficking—although NGOs asserted the government had prioritized other crimes for many years prior to the pandemic. The government did not report comprehensive and disaggregated law enforcement data, but provided information from all French departments and territories, including those overseas. The government did not report the number of cases it investigated in 2020 or 2019, compared with 313 cases involving 944 suspects in 2018. In 2020, the government reported investigating and dismantling 53 networks involved in facilitating human trafficking and commercial sex crimes, leading to the arrests of 875 suspects. In 2020, the government changed its methodology for recording trafficking prosecutions and convictions to include cases heard in courts of first instance as well. The government reported prosecuting 129 trafficking suspects in 2019, the most recent year data was available, a decrease compared with 184 suspects in 2018. The government reported convicting 91 traffickers in 2019, the most recent year for which data was available; compared with 104 in 2018. While the government did not report

comprehensive and specific sentencing data in a format that allowed for an accurate assessment of significant sentencing, it provided a five-year average (2015-2019) of 3.6 years' imprisonment. However, the media reported on sentences for 55 of 91 convicted traffickers in 2019, the year required to be assessed, of which at least 51 of 91 (56 percent) traffickers received significant prison sentences, compared with significant sentences issued to 40 percent of traffickers in 2018, as reported by the media.

In 2020, the government reported it took steps to address government complicity in human trafficking crimes by indicting a high-level court official on sex trafficking-related charges; authorities also indicted a high-level magistrate, and former children's judge, on child sex trafficking-related charges. The National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) urged courts to issue more consistent and stringent penalties to convicted human traffickers and NGOs expressed concerns about the inconsistency of anti-trafficking prosecutions across the country, which could vary depending on the level of engagement of local prosecutors. The media also reported that in October 2019, the government convicted a former Burundian diplomat and his spouse for labor trafficking and the exploitation of a domestic worker and sentenced them to 10 years' imprisonment. Courts suspended both sentences and issued a fine; the defendants appealed the sentences in 2020, which remained pending at the end of the reporting period. During the reporting period, the government, through Operation Barkhane, provided support to Malian armed groups who used and recruited child soldiers. The pandemic caused courts to shut down for two months in 2020, which delayed the processing of all cases. The government did not report the amount of assets seized from convicted traffickers in 2020, but in 2019, the government seized €250 million (\$306.75 million) and €10 million (\$12.27 million) in 2018.

The government had several bodies that were responsible for investigating trafficking crimes: the Ministry of Interior's Central Office for Combating Human Trafficking, comprising 25 investigators, was responsible for cases of sex trafficking, and the Central Office for Combatting Illegal Labor and the Central Office for the Suppression of Irregular Migration and the Employment of Irregular Migrants were responsible for labor trafficking cases. The government continued anti-trafficking training programs, some of which included victim identification training, for magistrates, prosecutors, police, social workers, civil servants, NGOs, and the hospitality sector; however, the government did not report the number of individuals who received training during the reporting period. In September

2020, the government reported hosting a conference on forced labor with representatives from 24 European countries as well as a training on identifying sex trafficking victims for 40 members of the French and Belgian security forces. Further, a local government hosted a training conference for 30 lawyers on the recognition of refugee status for female sex trafficking victims, especially from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria. These training efforts compared with 88 people trained in 2019. The CNCDH and several other government bodies raised concerns regarding the lack of adequate training for many police investigators on techniques to dismantle human trafficking organizations that operated on the internet and other technologies—a trend that rapidly increased during the pandemic. A June 2020 government report asserted law enforcement also lacked sufficient awareness of trafficking organizations that exploited male and transgender victims, despite the extreme violence often used by these organizations. The CNCDH recommended training on the use of new technologies in human trafficking cases and for investigators who already had the capacity to track these networks to prioritize human trafficking cases over other crimes. Further, an NGO asserted police sometimes recorded sex and labor trafficking complaints as lesser crimes that did not necessitate an official investigation or failed to register the complaint at all. NGOs also observed that judges and prosecutors were sometimes reluctant to formally certify forced labor victims because of the protections subsequently granted to them and recommended additional targeted training. In 2020, the government collaborated in international investigations, including with EUROPOL, INTERPOL, Bulgaria, Hungary, Luxembourg, and Romania, which resulted in the identification of 11 victims and the arrest of 10 trafficking suspects; a decrease compared with four identified victims, 42 arrests, four prosecutions, and 17 convictions in 2019. The government continued to maintain a French police liaison in Nigeria to facilitate cooperation with local law enforcement on investigations of human trafficking. The government also signed an information sharing agreement with the United Kingdom on human trafficking and cooperated with the Government of Georgia, but did not report any concrete results.

PROTECTION

The government maintained inadequate victim identification and protection efforts. The government reported police identified 892 victims of exploitation in 2020, including 217 children; however, contrary to prior years, the number of trafficking victims identified by

the government was not sufficiently disaggregated and a broader data set was reported, which may have included victims of adult and child sex trafficking. This compared with 175 victims of trafficking, 717 victims of aggravated sexual exploitation, and 39 victims of exploitation in 2019, for a total of 931. Gaps in victim identification remained, as the government did not report identifying any French national or labor trafficking victims. Victim protection data included all French departments and territories, including those overseas. Pandemic lockdowns led to decreased use of bars and nightclubs and the increased use of private locations and the internet as venues for exploitation, which exacerbated vulnerabilities for sex trafficking victims and decreased victim visibility to authorities. The pandemic also exacerbated vulnerabilities for labor trafficking victims through increased isolation of migrant and domestic workers, which complicated detection by officials and NGOs.

The Ministry of Solidarity and Health and the City of Paris provided funding for the Ac-Se system, an NGO-managed network of 50 NGO-run shelters and specialized NGOs assisting adult victims of sex and labor trafficking. Both police and NGOs referred victims to Ac-Se. The government provided Ac-Se with €234,000 (\$287,120) in 2020, in addition to an unreported amount of funding it dispersed to individual NGOs supporting the Ac-Se network. This amount compared to €240,000 (\$294,480) provided in 2019. In addition to its regular funding, the government provided Ac-Se with an additional €563,000 (\$690,800) in November 2020 for an 18-month period to provide additional victim assistance; this funding was confiscated from seized assets of convicted traffickers. However, NGOs criticized the amount of funding generally provided by the government to all NGOs for victim assistance as insufficient and asserted that the government often funded anti-trafficking efforts from the women's rights budget with little transparency in how much it allocated specifically to human trafficking. NGOs also raised concerns pertaining to the lack of a dedicated budget allocation to NGOs providing victim assistance to trafficking victims, resulting in their need to continually obtain private funding. In addition to victims identified by the government, NGOs reported identifying at least 6,457 human trafficking victims and assisting 2,573 in 2020, but many of the NGOs did not receive government funding and the government did not provide further details. Experts and NGOs expressed concerns regarding the government's national statistics on victim identification and asserted the scale of human trafficking in France was likely much higher.

Only the police, gendarmerie, judiciary, and labor inspectors could formally identify victims and formal victim identification was dependent upon cooperation with law enforcement. The CNCDH, which functioned as the independent national rapporteur, urged the government to allow formal victim identification without a requirement to cooperate with law enforcement and also by entities other than law enforcement, including by civil society, healthcare workers, and social workers; however, the government did not report efforts to allow other entities to formally identify victims. Further, NGOs reported that recognition as a trafficking victim was difficult; such status offered additional protections and in practice was necessary to obtain asylum or a residence permit, residency papers, healthcare, and housing.

In both its 2013 and 2017 reports, GRETA urged the government to adopt a national identification and referral mechanism. The government has never had a national identification and referral mechanism to ensure uniform and equal treatment of victims and did not take concrete steps in the reporting period to adopt one. However, most ministries and regions had formal procedures for identifying victims and authorities continued to use an NGO-run referral mechanism. Experts, NGOs, and the national rapporteur reported gaps in authorities' proactive victim identification efforts persisted during the reporting period; they called for improving victim identification as a top priority in the anti-trafficking national action plan. The government assumes the majority of individuals in commercial sex and all foreign adult individuals in commercial sex are trafficking victims, and the government systematically screens this population for trafficking indicators. However, this assumption could have led to a misunderstanding of sex trafficking amongst front-line officials and conflation with commercial sex. Further, authorities often mischaracterized victims of forced criminality as delinquents or illegal workers and consequently excluded them from assistance. Victims of forced labor experienced difficulty in formal recognition as victims.

Both police and NGOs referred victims to Ac-Se. While only partial data on victim assistance was available, government-funded NGOs reported assisting 260 trafficking victims in 2020, an increase compared with 64 victims in 2019, 86 in 2018, and 79 in 2017. Ac-Se provided victims with shelter, legal, medical, and psychological services; in 2020, 48 victims and nine child dependents received shelter and three victims were assisted with voluntary repatriation. This compared with 57 victims, including 12 children, who received shelter and seven who were assisted with voluntary repatriation in 2019. In

2020, a government-funded NGO reported providing assistance to more than 200 victims, including 51 new victims, most of whom were victims of forced labor and domestic servitude. Not all trafficking victims were eligible for admittance into Ac-Se's shelter program, unless they were in immediate danger or in a highly vulnerable situation that required geographic relocation; NGOs observed that migrants without legal status often struggled to find housing, which increased their risk of exploitation. Although formal victim identification required law enforcement cooperation, victims who chose not to cooperate could still receive free medical attention. Local governments provided French language classes to victims, and some victims could qualify for subsidized housing and job training programs, but the government did not report the number of victims provided with these benefits. The national employment agency provided some foreign victims with an initial stipend of €350 (\$429) a month but did not report the number of victims that received this stipend during the reporting period; civil society organizations reported the conditions for being granted a stipend were not uniform and varied by region. Although NGOs sometimes provided psychological support to victims, the government did not fund this service and NGOs raised concerns the government provided little psychological counseling to victims. The central and municipal governments continued to partially fund the operation of a shelter in Paris that could accommodate 12 victims, as well as a small number of emergency apartments external to the Ac-Se system. There were no accommodation centers dedicated to adult male trafficking victims, but communal homes or homeless shelters were sometimes used; however, these accommodations did not take into account the specific needs of trafficking victims. Police referred child trafficking victims to the Child Welfare Services (ASE) system, which provided the children with shelter. However, following a documentary revealing ASE's past practice of placing child victims alone in hotels, the government ceased this practice in January 2021 and began placing children in secure housing. GRETA and the national rapporteur reported a lack of adequate resources for the special assistance needs of child trafficking victims. To adapt to pandemic-related restrictions, the government found new lodging accommodations for 50 child victims of trafficking. Some shelters were required to limit capacities to adhere to pandemic-related social distancing requirements and ensure the continued safety of victims.

The government had an NGO-run referral program to transfer victims detained, arrested, or placed in protective custody by law enforcement authorities to institutions that provided short-term care. Judges heard criminal trials for trafficking in private at the

victim's request and testimony by video or remotely was also available. To limit re-traumatization, victims usually had access to a psychologist during court proceedings and the law limited the interview of child victims to one time. NGOs noted the government did not consistently provide interpreters to victims or information in a language they understood, the responsibility of which would then pass to the NGO. The government had a witness protection program that trafficking victims could use; however, despite the government reporting that traffickers often threatened trafficking victims and their families to not speak to law enforcement, especially if the trafficker was wealthy, well-connected, or had diplomatic immunity, authorities rarely used the program. The government did not report utilizing the witness protection program for any trafficking victims during the reporting period, which may have decreased the willingness of some victims to cooperate with law enforcement. The CNCDH urged the government to improve assistance provided to victims during their trials, but the government did not make efforts to do so during the reporting period. Victims were entitled to receive a 30-day reflection period during which they could decide whether to lodge a complaint or participate in criminal proceedings against a trafficker; however, some authorities were not familiar with the reflection period and did not offer it.

The government did not report the number of temporary residence permits granted to formally recognized trafficking victims; it issued such permits only when victims cooperated with police investigations or enrolled in the government's reintegration program, which required ceasing engagement in commercial sex and often required paperwork victims could not obtain. Authorities generally offered permanent residency to trafficking victims following a successful conviction of their trafficker. Trafficking victims were also eligible for international protection under refugee status or subsidiary protection status in cases where victims had a credible fear of retaliation, including from public authorities in their country of origin, if returned; however, the government did not report the number of victims granted such status during the reporting period. The government offered a specialized support program for asylum-seekers who were also victims of violence or human trafficking, but it required the victims to be formally recognized; the program provided secure lodging, psychological support, and a path to request asylum, but the government did not report how many asylum-seekers utilized this program during the reporting period. In response to the pandemic, the government extended the expiration dates of residence permits for asylum-seekers by six months in 2020. The government had internal guidelines to evaluate and process asylum claims on

the basis of labor trafficking. A large collective of anti-trafficking NGOs believed the new law on asylum and immigration, which eased restrictions on migrant deportation, limited victims' ability to receive temporary residence due to new time-bound restrictions on permit applications and more stringent approval criteria. The government reported conducting an unknown number of training sessions for the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons on identifying human trafficking victims and included training on internal guidelines pertaining to protection needs. GRETA reported police arrested and prosecuted child victims of forced begging and forced criminality without screening for trafficking indicators. In 2020, the government did not report uniformly screening irregular migrants, who were vulnerable to trafficking, in Mayotte for trafficking indicators prior to their deportation, which could have left some trafficking victims unidentified. The government also did not report taking steps to address the 3,000 to 4,000 unaccompanied Comorian children at risk for sex and labor trafficking in the French department of Mayotte by offering protection services such as medical care, shelter, or education. Further, the government did not uniformly screen vulnerable migrants from settlements in Calais prior to their removal, nor allow NGOs the opportunity to do so, which could have left some trafficking victims unidentified. Criminal courts could order traffickers to pay restitution to victims who were citizens of France or when the act was committed on French territory, the European Economic Community (ECC), or had legal immigration status; the government reported awarding restitution to at least three victims in 2020. Victims who were citizens of France, the ECC, or had legal immigration status could also bring a civil suit against a trafficker for damages; however, authorities did not report awarding damage to any victims during the reporting period. Victims lacking legal status were ineligible for restitution or damages. GRETA and NGOs reported victim restitution was rare.

PREVENTION

The government maintained uneven prevention efforts. MIPROF continued to coordinate government-wide efforts on anti-trafficking and the prevention of violence against women; however, NGOs expressed concern regarding insufficient personnel and resources allocated to the office. MIPROF's anti-trafficking steering committee included national, regional, and local governments, as well as NGOs; it met once during the reporting period, but NGOs noted an overall decrease in the government's engagement

with NGOs. In September 2020, the government established a new inter-ministerial working group on child sex trafficking, which included NGOs, targeting improved victim identification. The CNCDH continued to serve as the independent national rapporteur for trafficking, but resources remained insufficient. The government had a national anti-trafficking action plan; however, the rapporteur criticized the plan, noting obstacles and deficiencies including the absence of a defined timeframe or budget. Further, the national rapporteur noted the action plan did not address the flaws of the first plan, which included prioritizing sex trafficking over labor trafficking, unequal efforts that varied by region, and the continued conflation of commercial sex and human trafficking by authorities. In the prior reporting period, the national rapporteur recommended annual plans incorporating specific deadlines, detailed measures, monitoring indicators, separated costs, and a dedicated source of funding; however, the government did not report taking any concrete steps on these recommendations.

The continued prioritization of sex trafficking led to insufficient efforts to combat labor trafficking and the CNCDH recommended increased training on labor trafficking for all front-line officials as labor trafficking was often categorized as labor code violations, undeclared work, undignified work conditions, or employing illegal migrants. The tendency for authorities to categorize labor trafficking as lesser crimes resulted in decreased deterrence. The government continued to make limited efforts to raise national awareness of human trafficking; efforts included continued participation in an awareness campaign implemented by an international organization and the dissemination of a previously published trafficking awareness manual, as well as an unknown number of awareness-raising seminars. During the reporting period, the government continued participation in a joint awareness campaign on sex trafficking with the Government of Sweden that was supplemented by a joint cooperation action plan in 2020; however, the government did not provide further information or results of this international cooperation. The government continued to lack a comprehensive and centralized data system on trafficking.

The government did not report having a licensing or accreditation process for labor recruiters, and they could charge recruitment or placement fees to workers. Passport withholding, contract switching, and wage withholding was illegal, and workers could pursue legal recourse. Although fraudulent labor recruitment remained a concern during the reporting period, the government did not report holding any labor recruitment or

placement agencies accountable for labor trafficking during the reporting period. In 2020, the government conducted 31,390 labor inspections, which resulted in the initiation of 16 trafficking investigations and the identification of 450 victims of exploitation; however, the government did not report whether it identified any trafficking victims as a result. This compared with 49,522 inspections conducted in 2019. NGOs reported satisfactory cooperation with labor inspectors on human trafficking. French law required large companies (with more than 5,000 employees) to have plans to eliminate labor exploitation by subcontractors. The government made efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism by funding programs to raise awareness in airports and with tourism operators of the illegality of and penalties associated with child sex tourism, as well as requiring students to complete an awareness course on sex tourism prior to their departure abroad. For destinations with higher incidences of child sex tourism, like Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Madagascar, the government included warnings on its website for travelers. In 2020, the government also convicted one French national for child sex tourism in Cambodia and Nepal; however, the government did not provide further details on previously reported investigations into at least 16 suspects of child sex tourism. The Government of Indonesia reported arresting a French national for child sex tourism in June 2020. The government made efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex by convicting 464 purchasers of commercial sex and requiring 176 to attend an awareness-raising course to combat the purchase of commercial sex, though efforts were inconsistent throughout the country. The government maintained several liaisons and advisors located in source countries to facilitate international anti-trafficking efforts.

The government continued to contribute to several anti-trafficking programs, implemented in partnership with international organizations, including in Morocco and Nigeria, as well as implementing a regional cooperation strategy for 11 countries in Southeast Europe. The government also continued to station liaison officers and judges abroad, including in Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Southeast Europe, who helped coordinate law enforcement efforts against traffickers. The government continued to fund anti-trafficking capacity-building programs across Africa's Gulf of Guinea region and victim support operations in Libya. Ac-Se continued to operate a hotline for trafficking victims as well as a hotline for children in abusive situations, including trafficking; however, neither hotline reported the number of trafficking-related calls received during the reporting period. The government continued to host an online platform that allowed citizens to flag

inappropriate content, which led to several human trafficking investigations. The government did not provide systematic anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel, although consular officials received training on identifying forced domestic servitude. NGOs also noted there was insufficient follow-up by the government regarding domestic workers who were employed by diplomats in France and that little could be done to assist victims because of the diplomatic immunity of the trafficker.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit foreign victims, and to a limited extent, domestic victims in France. The pandemic exacerbated vulnerabilities for trafficking victims, including increasing the isolation of migrant and seasonal workers as well as sex trafficking victims, which complicated detection by officials and NGOs. Sex and labor traffickers exploit foreign victims from Eastern Europe, West and North Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. In 2020, the government released the results of a large-scale victim survey completed by 37 NGOs. It found that in 2019, 81 percent were victims of sex trafficking, 8 percent were victims of forced labor, 3 percent were victims of forced criminality, and 1 percent were victims of forced begging. One third of victims surveyed came from West Africa, mostly Nigeria, followed in frequency by victims from North Africa and Eastern Europe. Authorities noted an increase in French girls as sex trafficking victims, as well as a general increase in child victims since 2016. NGOs estimate that between 6,000 and 8,000 French teenagers are victims of child sex trafficking, with more than half between the ages of 15 and 16. Nigerian females make up the majority of sex trafficking victims. During the pandemic, sex traffickers increased the usage of online platforms to recruit and exploit victims and book apartment rentals to make their illicit operations difficult to track; NGOs estimate that more than half of commercial sex encounters were organized online. NGOs report an increase in the number of Nigerian women in commercial sex; pandemic-related lockdowns also exacerbated unsafe living conditions and increased vulnerabilities to sex trafficking. Authorities report traffickers encourage Nigerian victims to claim asylum to obtain legal residency and facilitate their continued exploitation. Sex trafficking networks, controlled by Bulgarian, Chinese, French, Hungarian, Nigerian, Romanian, and South American traffickers, exploit women through debt bondage, physical force, and psychological coercion, including the invocation of voodoo and drug addiction. Chinese criminal

networks also use as many as 400 massage parlors as fronts for the purchase of commercial sex, raising concerns about sex trafficking. The government estimates the majority of the 40,000 to 50,000 individuals in commercial sex in France, about 90 percent of whom are foreign, are likely trafficking victims. Members of the LGBTQI+ community are vulnerable to trafficking and traffickers increasingly exploit transgender victims in sex trafficking. Traffickers exploit children, primarily from Romania, West and North Africa, and the Middle East, in sex trafficking in France. Traffickers often lure victims with fraudulent offers of economic opportunities and target undocumented workers already in France. In suburban areas, there has been a sharp rise in sex traffickers known as “lover boys” coercing vulnerable girls into sex trafficking, often through a sham romantic relationship. French citizens sometimes engage in child sex tourism abroad.

Labor trafficking most frequently occurs in domestic work, followed by construction, small commerce, agriculture, fishing, and livestock; the majority of identified labor trafficking victims are women. Expansive criminal networks force children to commit crimes; most victims are from Romania and North Africa, many of whom are addicted to controlled substances. Seasonal migrant workers are vulnerable to labor trafficking while harvesting grapes for winemakers in the Champagne region and are often hired through subcontractors using fraudulent job descriptions and wages. Traffickers exploit the large influx of unaccompanied children who have entered France in recent years. Roma and unaccompanied children in France are at risk for forced begging and forced theft. The families of Roma children are often also their traffickers. In 2020, the government found that immediate or extended family members are the traffickers for 88 percent of victims of forced crime and forced begging; 62 percent of sex trafficking victims knew their traffickers beforehand. Traffickers exploit mentally disabled victims in forced labor in agriculture and begging. The estimated 3,000 to 4,000 unaccompanied Comorian children on the island Mayotte, a French department, remained at risk for labor and sex trafficking. Protection services, such as medical, shelter, and education, are not available to unaccompanied children on Mayotte, and previous efforts of the Comorian National Human Rights Commission to investigate further were denied by the French embassy in Comoros. In 2020, the government, through Operation Barkhane, provided support to Malian armed groups who used and recruited child soldiers. Labor traffickers exploit women and children in domestic servitude – the most frequent case being when families exploit relatives brought from Africa to work in their households; according to a 2020

report, domestic servitude makes up approximately 10 percent of all trafficking in France. Nigerian trafficking networks use migrant and drug trafficking routes through Niger, Libya, and Italy to transport women and girls to France, where they exploit them in trafficking and debt bondage. Nigerian victims report experiencing trafficking in Italy while awaiting legal residency. Cuban medical professionals working in Martinique, a French department, during the pandemic may have been forced to work by the Cuban government.

TAGS

[Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs](#)

[France](#)

[Human Trafficking](#)

[Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons](#)

Related Articles

— JULY 1, 2021

[2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Albania](#)

[READ MORE](#)

— JULY 1, 2021

[2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Armenia](#)

— JULY 1, 2021

[2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Austria](#)

[READ MORE](#)

White House

USA.gov

Office of the Inspector General

Archives

Contact Us

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

[Copyright Information](#)

[FOIA](#)

[No FEAR Act](#)