

Human Trafficking Prevention

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MEETING THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The global anti-trafficking movement, now well into its second decade, has successfully used the 3P paradigm of prosecution, protection, and prevention to strengthen how the world combats trafficking in persons. Governments committed to enhancing **prosecution** of traffickers have enacted laws that criminalize all forms of human trafficking and prescribe sufficiently stringent sentences.

Protection efforts have empowered individuals to move beyond their victimization and rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and respect. **Prevention** measures have provided communities around the world with valuable information about the risks of human trafficking, elevating public consciousness about this crime.

Yet so much work remains. Despite sustained anti-trafficking efforts, millions of individuals are bound by mental, physical, and financial coercion and manipulation by traffickers who exploit their vulnerabilities for profit. Whether they are victims of sex or labor trafficking, the suffering of these individuals is unconscionable. Meanwhile, the broader effects of human trafficking on society must also be addressed—from the splintering of families and communities and the distortion of global markets, to the weakening of the rule of law and strengthening of transnational organized criminal networks.

While continued efforts in protection and prosecution are essential, human trafficking prevention strategies deserve commensurate attention and resources. Governments must work in partnership with NGOs, survivors, community and religious leaders, and the private sector to study vulnerable populations and develop targeted strategies to prevent and address the factors that drive modern slavery in their communities. Without prevention, governments are left to respond to the consequences of human trafficking without coming any nearer to seeing its end.

Effective prevention efforts address the tactics of human traffickers head on. With the dissemination of accurate and targeted information, communities will be better prepared to respond to the threat of human trafficking. Strategic intervention programs can reach at-risk populations before they

“*People are not merchandise and cannot be used as bait during an economic and political crisis. Poverty does not justify human trafficking.*”

– Norotiana Ramboarivelo Jeannoda,
2015 Trafficking in Persons Report
Hero

are faced with deceitful recruitment practices of those bent on exploiting them for labor or commercial sex. Meaningful partnerships between public and private sectors and civil society can expand awareness, leverage expertise, and facilitate creative solutions.

Over time, new prevention measures and methods will emerge and evolve as governments and anti-trafficking stakeholders apply experience and share lessons learned. Although often

the hardest to measure, prevention efforts can become more sophisticated, scalable, and effective if supported by sufficient resources and political will.

This year’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* focuses on the positive developments and continued challenges of preventing trafficking, and it considers how governments and the broader anti-trafficking community can effectively ensure that those who are vulnerable to human trafficking have the tools and opportunities to avert the risks of exploitation.

VICTIM STORIES

The victims’ testimonies included in this *Report* are meant to be illustrative and to characterize the many forms of trafficking and the wide variety of places in which they occur. They do not reflect all forms of human trafficking and could take place almost anywhere in the world. Many of the victims’ names have been changed in this *Report*. Most photographs are not images of confirmed trafficking victims. They illustrate the myriad forms of exploitation that comprise human trafficking and the variety of situations in which trafficking victims are found.

VULNERABILITY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Although human trafficking affects every demographic, a common factor across all forms of modern slavery is the victims' vulnerability to exploitation. Systemic social, cultural, and economic policies or practices may marginalize or discriminate against individuals and groups because they are poor, are intellectually or physically disabled, or because of their gender or ethnicity. People may lack access to health and legal services due to their status or language barriers; and some, such as communities in situations of crisis and children, may not be capable of protecting themselves.

Traffickers exploit these disadvantages. They prey on those who lack security and opportunity, coerce or deceive them to gain control, and then profit from their compelled service. To prevent this, governments, with assistance from first responders, NGOs, and local communities, should consider their own populations, cultures, and policies to identify those individuals who may be uniquely vulnerable within their borders. On this basis, communities can develop effective strategies to increase awareness and prevent human trafficking.

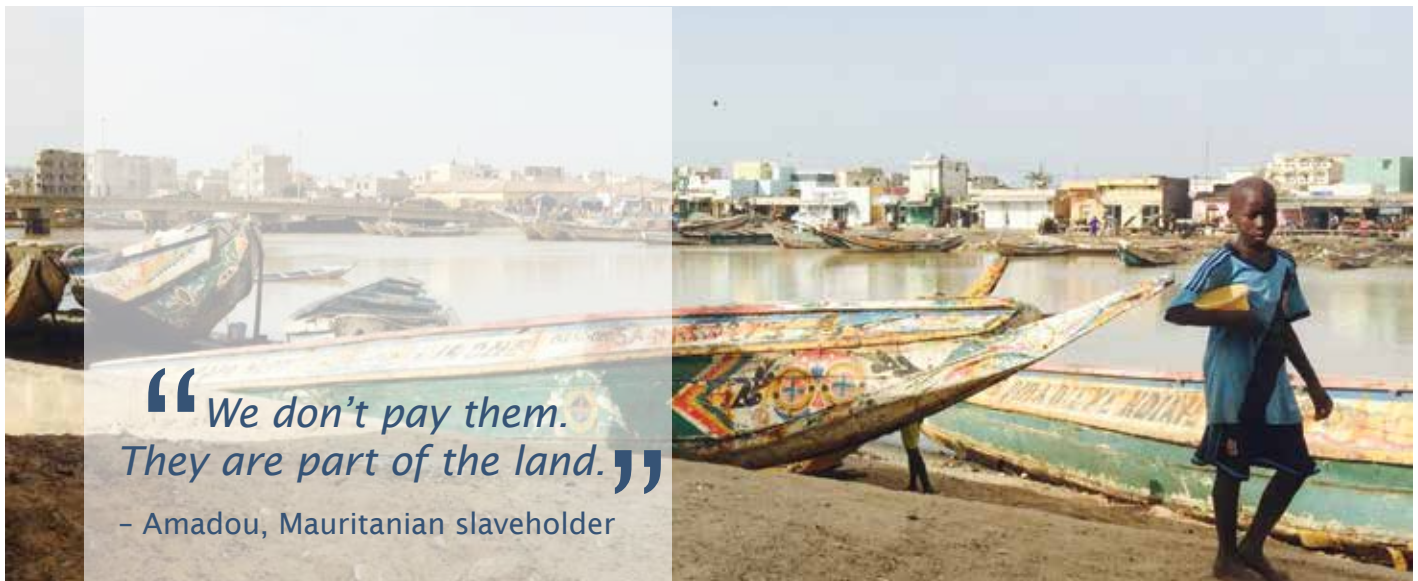
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the *UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* (Palermo Protocol) recognizes the connection between vulnerability and human trafficking, and encourages state parties to take or strengthen measures to alleviate those factors that make people vulnerable to human trafficking, including poverty, underdevelopment, and lack of equal opportunity. Understanding the root causes will help governments shape strategic prevention efforts and also integrate anti-trafficking elements into other programming for vulnerable populations.

This introductory section of the Report focuses on five elements of effective prevention strategies: enhancing understanding through research; raising awareness to prevent recruitment and reduce demand; implementing policies and programs that decrease risks and empower vulnerable groups; capitalizing on the knowledge of experts across the globe by increasing collaboration between and within countries; and facilitating partnerships between governments, civil society, and other anti-trafficking actors.

The pages that follow will also highlight a selection of populations traditionally considered at high risk of human trafficking; however, the list is not exhaustive. Generally, when inequality exists and where certain people lack access to social protection and justice, human traffickers are able to thrive.

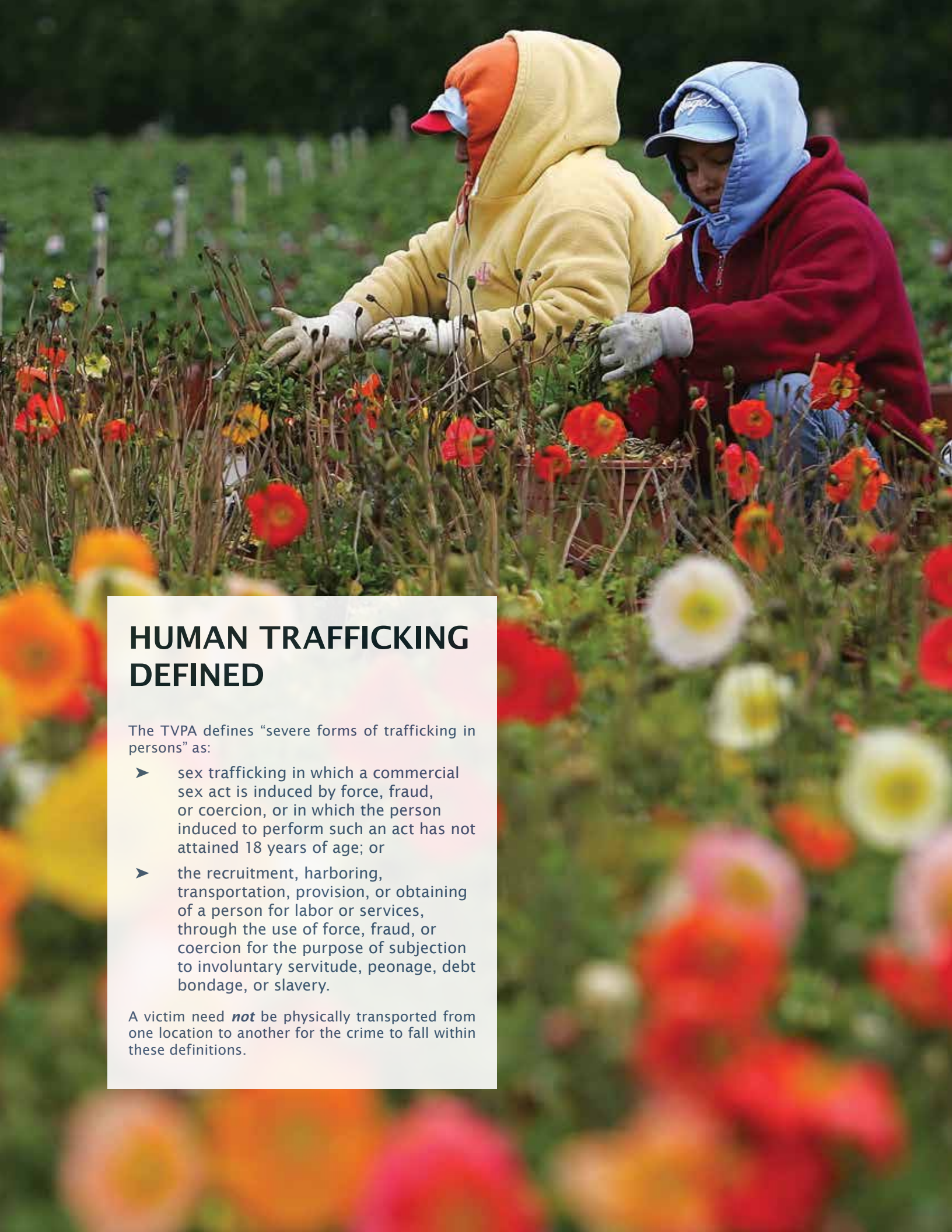
VIETNAM | CHINA

When Ping was 12 years old, an acquaintance offered her and a friend jobs in a different city in Vietnam. Ping and her friend accepted the offer. The recruiter took them to a local bus station and placed them on a bus with their “caretaker.” When they disembarked, the caretaker revealed they were in China and had been sold into prostitution with 20 other girls. When one of the girls refused to do as she was told, the owners beat her severely. Ping suffered in the brothel for almost a year before authorities raided the establishment, rescued the girls, and returned them to Vietnam. Although Ping still suffers from headaches and poor vision—including moments of blindness—as a result of her exploitation, she is training for a career in hairdressing.



“ We don't pay them.
They are part of the land. ”
- Amadou, Mauritanian slaveholder

In West Africa, traffickers pose as Koranic school teachers and force young students to beg for food and money instead of allowing them to gain an education. In Europe, traffickers subject children—including Roma and disabled children—to forced begging. In South Asia, some traffickers maim children before subjecting them to forced begging to increase the children's profits.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

The TVPA defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

A victim need *not* be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within these definitions.

HUNGARY | UNITED STATES

Michael was looking for jobs on the internet when he met Lorant, who offered him the chance to earn a lot of money working as a male escort in the United States. Michael and several other men accepted the offer, left Hungary, and traveled to Florida, where Lorant instead forced them into prostitution for 18-20 hours each day without pay. Lorant forced eight men to stay in a one-bedroom apartment, confiscated their identity documents, and threatened to kill them if they asked to leave. Police discovered the trafficking scheme after neighbors reported unusual behavior outside the men's living quarters. Lorant was convicted of human trafficking and racketeering and sentenced to 11 years in prison.

RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Given the complex nature of human trafficking, it is difficult to amass reliable data to document local, regional, and global prevalence. Over the years, the advocacy of survivors has expanded understanding of the crime, and together with research and program evaluations, has shed light on best practices in victim protection and law enforcement. However, significant gaps in knowledge of how to prevent human trafficking remain. Additional efforts and resources for research, data collection, and evaluation are needed to identify those actions most effective to prevent victimization.

Reliable baseline information, data, and research that illuminates the causes, prevalence, characteristics, trends, and consequences of all forms of human trafficking in various countries and cultures is crucial for developing anti-trafficking prevention strategies and measuring their impact. To target prevention measures more precisely, governments and civil society should encourage and fund research that identifies populations vulnerable to human trafficking, including a more comprehensive understanding of root causes that are specific to states, communities, and cultural contexts. Understanding unique vulnerabilities along with trends in how people cope with these challenges can help in the development of targeted prevention strategies.

When studying migration, for example, research should be designed to study human trafficking in source and destination countries, as well as along migration routes, as prevention measures will vary depending on the target population and objective. This will require cross-national research, information sharing, and bilateral, regional, and international cooperation to provide insight into the various points where individuals come in contact with potential traffickers.

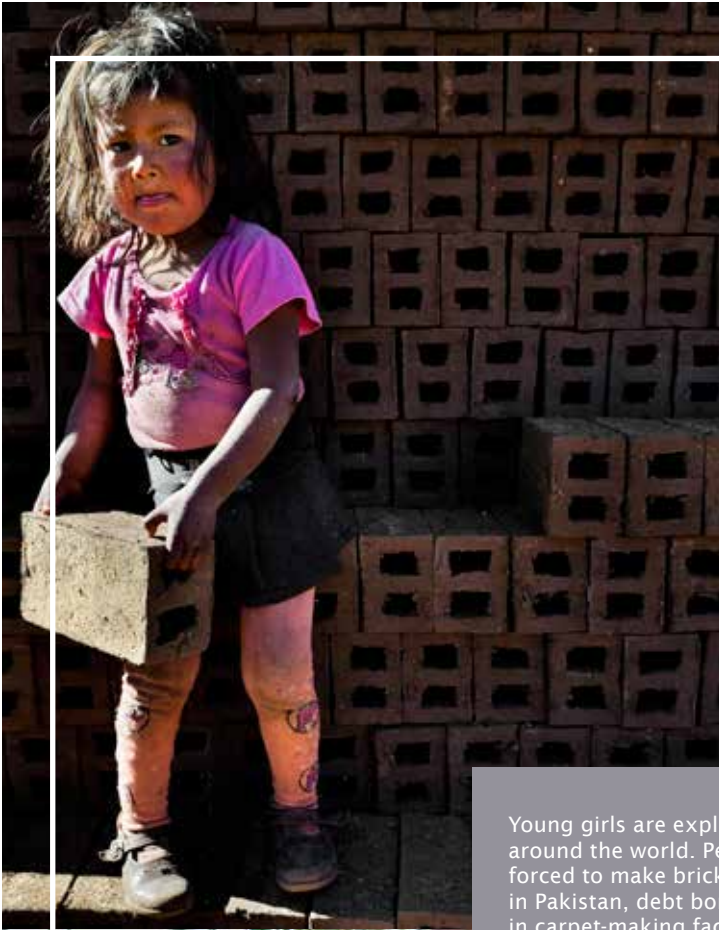
Accurate baseline data is critical not only in the development of prevention measures but also for accurate assessment of the impact of policies and assistance programs, including unintended negative consequences. Fully understanding the impact of a prevention strategy is necessary to scale or modify it based on outcome. Prevention programming should devote both consideration and resources to evaluation.

New research and information should be freely shared among stakeholders to enhance the collective ability to respond to human trafficking. Research projects should include recommendations for various stakeholders as well as a dissemination plan to ensure the results are widely circulated.

Reliable research is the backbone of any evidence-based policy or program and anti-trafficking stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure that sufficient attention and funding are dedicated to it.

“At first, I thought he was my boyfriend. Then he convinced me to have sex with strangers to make money. He was my pimp. I was 15 years old. I was being advertised on the Internet and sold for sex to support my ‘boyfriend.’”

– Jessica, sex trafficking survivor



Young girls are exploited in forced labor around the world. Peruvian girls are forced to make bricks in the hot sun; in Pakistan, debt bondage traps girls in carpet-making factories; in Ethiopia, girls from rural areas are exploited in domestic servitude; and traffickers in Malawi force girls to labor in the agricultural sector.



EXAMPLES:

- » In 2015, IOM released a report, *Addressing Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Times of Crisis: Evidence and Recommendations for Further Action to Protect Vulnerable and Mobile Populations*, which looks at armed conflicts, natural disasters, and protracted crises based on research conducted in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Haiti, Nepal, the Philippines, eastern and northern Africa, Yemen, and tsunami-affected areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The report discusses the risks of trafficking in crisis situations and includes evidence-based recommendations for the humanitarian community on preventing and improving of responses to human trafficking before, during, and after a crisis.
- » In 2016, Harvard University released a study, *When We Raise Our Voice: The Challenge of Eradicating Labor Exploitation*, focused on the work of an Indian NGO that developed a community empowerment model to assist vulnerable groups in identifying their priorities and preventing modern slavery. The study reports a decline in human trafficking over a four-year period in the area studied.
- » To help states combat transnational crime, including human trafficking, INTERPOL provides its 190 member countries with resources, including a secure communications network relevant to criminal investigations and humanitarian efforts. At the request of its member countries, INTERPOL publishes “green notices” on persons who present a danger to the public based on their prior criminal history, such as convicted sex offenders and members of violent gangs.

RAISING AWARENESS

Increasing public awareness about the risks and signs of human trafficking is an important piece of any anti-trafficking prevention strategy, and to date has been the primary prevention measure used by governments and other stakeholders. Typically, public awareness campaigns target either those considered to be most at risk, such as migrant workers; those who may be contributing wittingly or unwittingly to the demand, such as public and private employers; or purchasers of commercial sex; or the general public, who may be able to spot the indicators of human trafficking and report suspicions to law enforcement.

Like other programs, anti-trafficking awareness campaigns must include an evaluation component to assess their impact and improve future campaigns. Often, general public awareness campaigns are limited due to the restrictions inherent in one-dimensional campaign materials such as posters, billboards, or print media advertisements, which often reduce the complexity of human trafficking into images and brief text. While this may help to raise general awareness about the existence of trafficking, it can also misrepresent the victims and confuse the issue. For example, images of physical restraint such as handcuffs or cages may influence what the public believes constitutes human trafficking; yet movement and physical restraint are not required for a crime to be considered human trafficking. Designers of these campaigns should fully understand the scope and scale of the problem in the target community and accurately depict the nature of the crime, its victims, and the perpetrators.

In contrast to broad or national efforts, awareness campaigns can also be designed to target particular individuals, for example by notifying travelers of the illegality of child sex tourism, informing workers of their rights and risks as they migrate for a job, or adopting corporate codes of conduct. Effective targeting should also include awareness-raising among: immigration authorities and law enforcement; diplomatic personnel; medical specialists; educational and social service personnel; and other professionals likely to come into contact with vulnerable individuals, so they are both prompted and equipped to recognize the signs of human trafficking and respond appropriately.

Together, governments, civil society organizations, and companies must collaborate to develop awareness campaigns that have clear objectives and measurable outcomes, that train and educate employees as well as relevant partners, and that promote sound anti-trafficking policies and secure reporting mechanisms.

FRANCE

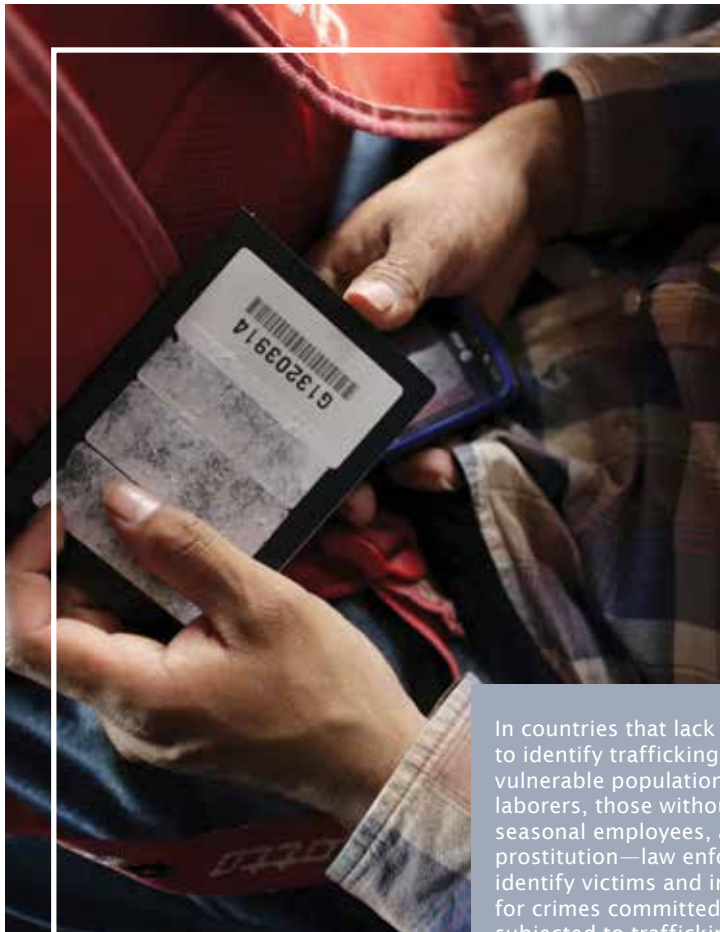
When Adelaide and Paul hit hard times, Paul suggested his wife consider prostitution for a year or two to supplement their income. Adelaide agreed, but when she wanted to quit, Paul forced her to continue. He took away her keys and cell phone, and would not let her leave the house or care for their son. He listed her on four escort websites, controlled what she wore and ate, and collected all the money she earned. Paul used psychological coercion and threatened Adelaide to keep her in prostitution; when she threatened to leave, he vowed he would find her. Paul was finally arrested and awaits trial, where he faces up to 10 years' imprisonment if convicted.

EXAMPLES:

- » The Government of Slovakia developed and financed the creation of a website that allows Slovak citizens traveling abroad for employment to register their contact information with friends and family. The registered user's contacts are alerted should the user cease usual online activity or fail to communicate with the contacts on pre-established schedules. If this happens, each contact receives information of the user's last known Internet connection access point location—information that could be relayed to Slovak law enforcement authorities.
- » In recent years, there has been growing international media attention on forced labor aboard fishing vessels in Southeast Asia, including investigative reports by the New York Times, Al Jazeera, The Guardian, South China Morning Post, and the Associated Press (AP), which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. The quality and frequency of reporting by international media has helped raise awareness of forced labor in the fishing industry among governments, businesses, and consumers.
- » In 2015, an NGO in India engaged with journalists to raise awareness of human trafficking within minority and marginalized communities. The organization trained journalists on how to better report cases of human trafficking, including bonded labor, for their audiences. These efforts aimed to better inform people in remote communities who may only get news in their local language, and may not often see reporting on human trafficking. Reporters uncovered human trafficking cases within their own communities and increased attention on the role of state government and police in prevention efforts.
- » In 2015, a Peruvian NGO conducted a campaign to raise awareness among tourists, mass media, tourism operators, and the general public about the criminal penalties for those who sexually exploit children in Loreto, a region known for human trafficking activity. The NGO takes a moving display of a jail, with a sign reading “here we punish child sexual exploitation,” to places where such cases have been reported.
- » In France, the Ministry of Education provides anti-trafficking awareness courses to students seeking a degree in hospitality and tourism. Specialized lessons alert students to the indicators of child sex tourism and their professional responsibility to take action when they recognize this crime.



IOM is one of many organizations that makes efforts to combat trafficking and raise awareness of the crime among vulnerable populations. In Ghana, two mothers and a child proudly display t-shirts they received while participating in child trafficking prevention activities hosted by IOM Ghana.



In countries that lack formal procedures to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations—including migrant laborers, those without identity documents, seasonal employees, and women in prostitution—law enforcement may fail to identify victims and instead penalize them for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. In the photo on the bottom right, the NGO Blue Dragon holds a legal registration drive in Vietnam to provide identity documents to those who have none, reducing their vulnerability to trafficking.



POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO REDUCE RISK AND EMPOWER VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

Public awareness campaigns are only one piece of an effective prevention strategy. Knowledge of the risks of trafficking is important to empower vulnerable populations and foster a vigilant general public, but governments and stakeholders must also develop measures that keep at-risk individuals safe from human trafficking. As a part of this, governments need to implement policies that can prevent trafficking and provide the necessary oversight and balance to avoid restricting freedoms.

For example, governments can measure and establish the identity of local populations by registering births, administering citizenship and nationality, and issuing identity documents—a lack of which renders individuals vulnerable to exploitation. Legal registration reduces vulnerabilities to human trafficking by enabling residents and their families to take advantage of programs and activities that require legal status, such as health coverage, education, access to social welfare, and employment in the formal economy. When governments allow workers to form and join trade unions, it also makes them less vulnerable to exploitation.

In addition, governments and the private sector can work together to identify and stop fraudulent recruitment. Governments should actively monitor labor recruitment agencies, train labor inspectors to identify signs of fraudulent recruitment, and adopt and enforce policies that regulate foreign labor recruiters and hold them civilly and criminally liable for fraudulent recruitment. The private sector can help by ensuring its companies advertise to prospective applicants with legal, formalized recruitment procedures and hire workers through such procedures, or directly, and not through unscrupulous middlemen.

Governments and NGOs should integrate anti-trafficking elements into broader programs, including those that focus on health, economic development, crisis management, and rule of law to leverage resources and maximize exposure to the issue. These policies should be designed with input from experts, trafficking survivors, and local communities. By examining existing programs that are directed toward vulnerable populations and integrating anti-trafficking components, stakeholders can institutionalize the issue and capitalize on established structures.

While preventing trafficking on the supply side—by raising awareness and reducing the supply of exploited laborers—is imperative, it is also necessary that governments work with civil society to reduce the demand for forced labor and commercial sex. By driving down demand, the business of human trafficking becomes less profitable and traffickers will have less incentive to exploit victims.

EXAMPLES:

- » In Vietnam, an NGO helped legally register with the state more than 2,000 ethnic minority residents in areas at high risk for human trafficking. In many places, individuals in remote locations do not receive clear information on the benefits of state services or the ways to access them, or they lack the financial means to travel to government offices for registration. Individuals without legal registration often do not have access to education, health care, or employment in the formal economy and are highly vulnerable to human trafficking.
- » OSCE is one of the first inter-governmental organizations to address explicitly government procurement as well as its own procurement of goods and services. Following on commitments of the December 2013 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE is reviewing relevant rules and regulations in regard to personnel and the procurement of goods and services to ensure that no OSCE activities contribute to any form of human trafficking.

NIGERIA | UNITED KINGDOM

When a British-Nigerian couple offered to take Paul, 14 years old, from Nigeria to the UK, enroll him in school, and pay him to perform housework, he accepted. Once in Britain, however, the family changed his name and added him to their family passport as an adopted son. They forced him to clean their house for as many as 17 hours each day for no pay and did not allow him to go to school. They took his passport, set up cameras to monitor his movements, and limited his contact with the outside world. Paul tried several times to escape; once he contacted the police, who told him they did not handle family matters. Eight years after that, Paul heard a radio report about modern slavery and bravely reached out to an NGO. The NGO helped, and the couple was arrested a few months later after having exploited Paul for 24 years. They each received 10-year sentences, six years for servitude and four for other crimes.

- » In Burkina Faso, an NGO is combating forced child labor in the cotton and gold industries using a model of training locally-based “Social Protection Community Facilitators (SPCFs)” who serve as leaders in their local area on child protection issues. The SPCFs implement their own awareness-raising activities in addition to monitoring child labor in their areas.
- » The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency facilitates public seminars and community forums for prospective migrant workers on indicators of illegal labor recruitment and human trafficking, and the Bureau of Immigration issues institutional guidelines on departure formalities for international-bound persons, setting clearly defined rules on inspections to prevent trafficking and other related offenses without deterring other travelers.

“ I had girls from the whole country. I had a guy in a nearby village, and he was looking for the girls for me. He was asking for 500 euros [about \$750 at the time] per girl...In the worst night, a woman would make you 300 euros. There were some nights when a woman made 1,500 to 2,000 euros.”

- Matthew, convicted sex trafficker

MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

Human trafficking occurs in virtually every country in the world and often crosses borders when victims move between source, transit, and destination countries. Multilateral engagement is a key component of many governments’ effective anti-trafficking efforts.

The international response to modern slavery began with the adoption of the Palermo Protocol in 2000 and has continued to grow. Multilateral organizations are ramping up efforts to combat trafficking by incorporating anti-trafficking policies into discussions of other pressing topics. What was once a stand-alone issue is now being integrated into work on other topics, including national security, human rights, violence against women and children, migration management and refugee protection, business responsibility and supply chain accountability, and economic development. In addition to leveraging their member states’ expertise and resources, multilateral organizations generate momentum to develop global, regional, and even domestic strategies to help dismantle trafficking networks and empower vulnerable populations.

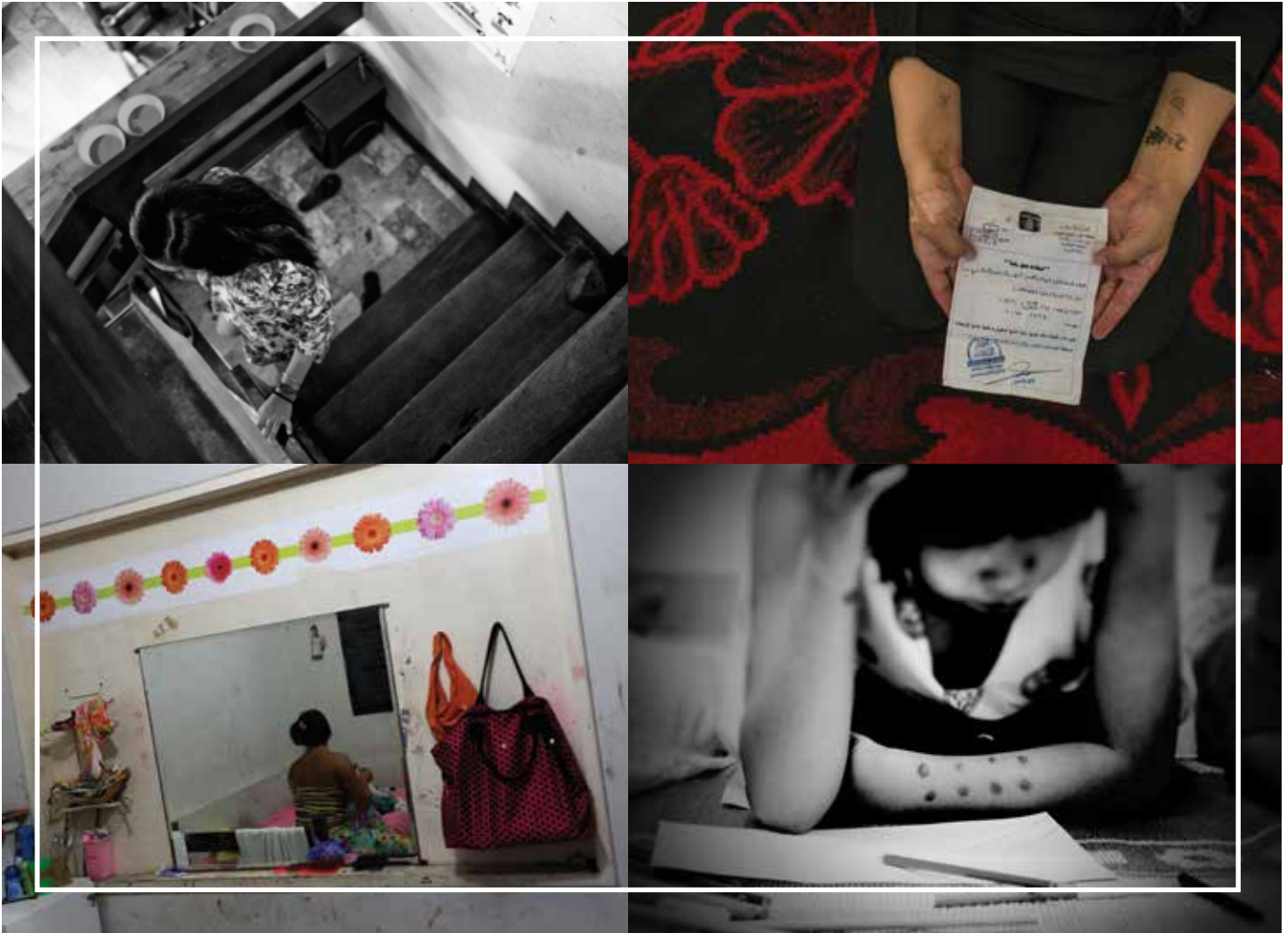
Further, multilateral and regional organizations work to foster consensus among their member states on common goals, commitments, and norms; and they can help standardize research and data collection methods at the regional and sub-regional levels. Multilateral forums also provide a venue for member states, civil society, academia, the private sector, and survivors to exchange information on experiences and challenges, including identifying new and emerging issues related to human trafficking. With the support of member states, multilateral organizations provide anti-trafficking training and technical assistance to countries, including to law enforcement, judges, media, first responders, and care providers.

To ensure they are not contributing to the problem of human trafficking, multilateral organizations and member states must institute and enforce policies to ensure that their personnel, including diplomats and peacekeepers, do not engage in trafficking in persons. In addition, international organizations can begin to monitor their supply chains and enforce policies that protect workers and reduce risks in the public procurement of goods and services.

Governments must be committed to engaging at the multilateral level and to adhering to and enforcing international obligations related to human trafficking, in particular the Palermo Protocol.

GUATEMALA | BELIZE

When Janine was 13 years old, she met a woman in Guatemala who promised her a well-paying babysitting job in Belize, where the woman lived. Janine accepted and was willingly smuggled from Guatemala to Belize. Instead of a babysitting job, the woman coerced Janine to work at a bar in a small village, and also subjected her to sex trafficking. Janine was never paid and was threatened with detention for having entered the country illegally. Janine was also afraid of a complicit law enforcement official who sexually exploited her. Janine escaped a year later and received assistance from local villagers and other law enforcement officials.



Sex trafficking affects adults and children in a variety of cultures and locations. Asian and African women who migrate to the Gulf for domestic labor can endure both labor trafficking and sexual abuse in the private homes of their employers. In the photo on the top right, a Yezidi sex trafficking survivor displays the “certificate of emancipation” she received from her sex trafficker after he had completed his training to be a suicide bomber and set her free; the certificate, signed by the judge of the western province of the Islamic State, allowed her to pass through Islamic State checkpoints in Syria and Iraq as a free woman. NGOs assist South American and Southeast Asian girls exploited in urban brothels and karaoke bars and provide medical and psycho-social care and job-skills training to help young survivors pursue independent futures.

EXAMPLES:

- » The OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova, conducted training in 2015 for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to raise awareness and improve capacity to identify human trafficking. This mission is deployed to Ukraine to monitor the implementation of the Minsk agreement, including ceasefire and heavy weapon withdrawal. The UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that there were more than 1.8 million internally displaced persons and refugees abroad as a result of the crisis in and around Ukraine, and this population is especially vulnerable to exploitation.
- » At the opening of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015, world leaders adopted a bold “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to guide the global community’s efforts to eradicate poverty, promote peace and equality, and protect the environment over the coming years. This Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets centered on economic, social, and environmental development. The UN integrated anti-trafficking elements into three of the goals.
- » In July 2015, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime provided a training manual to Panamanian Public Ministry personnel on conducting psychological interviews that protect trafficking victims during their participation in legal investigations against their traffickers. Panamanian officials have already begun to put the procedures into practice.

ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS

Acknowledging that no single response can end human trafficking, governments around the world are engaging with other stakeholders to increase their ability to prevent modern slavery. Survivors, NGOs, donors, academics, and businesses have complementary skills and perspectives that, when combined, drive innovation and bring about sustained progress. In this regard, governments play a vital role in convening various stakeholders to harness innovative ideas and create partnerships.

THREE EXAMPLES ARE:

- » The Santa Marta Group is a partnership between international police chiefs and Catholic bishops from around the world, working together with civil society to end modern slavery through a process endorsed by Pope Francis. The objective of the Santa Marta Group is to combine the resources of the Church with those of law enforcement agencies to prevent trafficking and provide care to victims.
- » The Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed an MOU with IOM to draft a comprehensive anti-trafficking law, and IOM began working with the government's interagency anti-trafficking committee to develop a law that will meet international standards on trafficking, taking into account prosecution, protection, and prevention for both sex trafficking and forced labor.
- » In Guatemala, a leading coffee company and a U.S. labor rights organization have teamed up, with support from the government, to promote transparency and accountability in Guatemala's coffee supply chain. Throughout the sector, stakeholders are gaining a better understanding of the risks of recruitment abuses, including those that lead to forced labor. The partners are strengthening communication between workers and key corporate and government actors, and building the capacity of all stakeholders, including civil society, to report and monitor recruitment practices in the coffee sector.

“ *It's not just a matter of law enforcement; it's a matter of moral obligation to end slavery of any kind on this planet, and we have to work at it.* ”

- Secretary of State John Kerry

A JOINT EFFORT

Preventing human trafficking is an enormous challenge, requiring the sustained efforts of many. Collaboration between government and nongovernmental stakeholders is critical to strengthening efforts to prevent modern slavery.

At its core, the global struggle to combat human trafficking is about political and public will. If ignored, traffickers will continue to reap enormous profits while communities suffer the many toxic effects. But if trafficking is confronted head on, vulnerable populations will be empowered to control more fully their lives and protect themselves from the harms of human trafficking.

Anti-trafficking stakeholders must continue efforts that have proven successful, but also commit to the development of new and creative approaches to the prevention of human trafficking. Trafficking prevention is a field largely underexplored and underfunded. There is a great deal of space for innovation and collaboration.

Witnessing the end of human trafficking will require leadership and political will at all levels of government and throughout the anti-trafficking community. It will require the allocation and responsible use of resources appropriate to the scale of the problem. And it will require individuals all over the world to be attuned to the signs of human trafficking, put aside differences, and take their responsibility seriously to prevent and address this crime.

Should the day ever come when human trafficking ceases to exist, it will not be because traffickers have stopped trying to take advantage of vulnerable individuals. Instead, it will be the culmination of efforts from a global community that refuses to allow it to continue.

Countries in the 2016 *TIP Report* that are not States Parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime



Between April 2015 and March 2016, the following governments became parties to the Protocol: the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Sri Lanka

GHANA

When Osei was only 6 years old, his parents gave him to a fishing master who promised to provide Osei with a fishing apprenticeship, education, and a job. This was a lie. Instead, he forced Osei and other children to work on a fishing boat for many hours each day in harsh conditions. The master also forced other children into domestic servitude near the lake. None of these children were allowed to go to school. They were not apprentices—they were forced laborers. Government officials and an NGO rescued the children, and they currently reside at a care center where they receive education, shelter, counseling, and other trafficking-specific services to help them heal and take steps to prepare for their futures.



In Ghana, traffickers promise parents of children as young as 5 years old they will provide them with an education and apprenticeship, but they instead exploit the boys in fishing on Lake Volta and the girls in domestic servitude in surrounding towns.

CHALLENGES IN PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

“ [M]easured against the world’s population of 7.4 billion people, one in every 113 people [or 65.3 million people] globally is now either an asylum-seeker, internally displaced or a refugee—putting them at a level of risk for which UNHCR knows no precedent. ”

– UNHCR, *Global Trends*

Too often, individuals around the world suffer extreme hardship or violence, experience discrimination, or face social marginalization. Service providers, researchers, and other witnesses have documented that human traffickers take advantage of such circumstances. Indeed, exploitation appears even more likely when a confluence of such circumstances besets particular communities. The cumulative effects can make certain populations—such as refugees and migrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals; religious minorities; people with disabilities; and those who are stateless—especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

In 2015, UNHCR reported that 76 countries criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct, with seven countries providing for the death penalty for certain offenses. These laws persecute and stigmatize LGBTI persons; even when not enforced, they validate discrimination and can lead to an increase in violence and harassment. This is particularly true when authorities do not act to protect all of their citizens and when they fail to investigate and prosecute crimes committed against members of particular groups. In several recent cases in countries that criminalize same-sex conduct, vigilante groups have carried out violent acts against LGBTI persons. In some communities, families who feel ashamed of an LGBTI relative have committed honor killings or sent them to clinics that practice “conversion therapy” to “rid them of homosexuality,” often by harmful methods.

In the United States, NGOs continue to report that LGBTI youth are over-represented among the runaway and homeless populations and have difficulties accessing tailored and non-discriminatory services. Those who are not self-sufficient are more susceptible to traffickers’ offers of shelter or food in exchange for performing commercial sex acts. Due to

social biases, LGBTI victims are also more likely to be penalized for acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. Because of this, victims are less likely to report their exploitation to local authorities or to access needed services.

More than a dozen countries have enacted anti-discrimination laws or conducted sensitivity training for law enforcement to protect LGBTI rights. Law enforcement agencies and service providers have benefitted from partnerships with organizations that have expertise on LGBTI issues to expand their service referral networks and learn how to develop inclusive environments for LGBTI victims. Governments can further strengthen their efforts by enhancing partnerships, especially with LGBTI survivors of trafficking, whose input is invaluable for trainings and discussions to strengthen understanding and improve support services.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

In many societies, members of religious minorities have a heightened vulnerability to trafficking. Traffickers have been known to target women and girls from religious minorities and force them into religious conversions and subsequent marriages, in which they may be subjected to domestic or sexual servitude. Religious minorities are also frequently discriminated against in job markets, especially in societies that formally restrict the exercise of rights by members of certain religions. This may make them more susceptible to traffickers’ fraudulent employment offers or other forms of abuse.

In certain countries where members of the religious majority control political power, government agencies, law enforcement entities, and judicial systems may be complicit in discriminating against religious minorities. In addition, certain countries still permit forced marriages, in purported adherence to local customs or religious beliefs. Victims from religious minorities forced into marriage or prostitution, or

subjected to domestic servitude, may also face barriers or outright resistance when bringing forward allegations of human trafficking. Once in court, those who do not prevail may be returned to their traffickers.

Many states enforce anti-blasphemy statutes, which frequently restrict the activities of religious minority communities. This may serve as a direct disincentive to bring forward accusations against religious leaders or members of favored religious groups. In the most severe cases, in which governments have criminalized participation in minority religions, many individuals from minority religions are barred from receiving government services and protections if they do not convert or conceal their religious affiliation. Exclusion from public services, such as financial assistance and medical care, and barriers to building support infrastructures leave religious minorities more vulnerable to traffickers' recruitment tactics.

Governments should denounce discrimination against and the persecution of religious minorities. Individuals from religious minorities should be afforded equal status and protection under the law and should have equal access to government services and protections. Without the rights granted to others in societies, individuals from religious minority communities, and particularly those who are the subject of governmental discrimination, will continue to be vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers.

MIGRANTS FLEEING CRISIS

The unprecedented flow of migrants, including refugees, to Europe since the beginning of 2015 has shed light on the challenges of identifying human trafficking victims among migrant populations. Some trafficking victims have been identified among those fleeing civil war and unrest, and many migrants remain vulnerable to trafficking en route to or after arriving in Europe. The limited number of confirmed trafficking cases may not be indicative of the size of the problem, given the reluctance of victims to seek out authorities or self-identify. The greatly overburdened asylum systems across Europe have also created challenges to implementing effective identification and screening measures.

Migrants, including asylum-seekers, and refugees are susceptible to many crimes, including extortion, rape, and human trafficking. Many migrants fleeing conflict rely on smugglers at some point during their journeys and, in some instances, their smugglers are involved in schemes designed to deceive and trap them in sex or labor trafficking. Women, unaccompanied minors, and those denied asylum are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, including while in transit and upon arrival in destination countries.

Some migrants arrive in Europe with no identity documents, which can increase their vulnerability to trafficking. Reports

SYRIA | LEBANON

Recruiters came to Angela's town in Syria offering paid work in restaurants or hotels in Lebanon, and Angela accepted the opportunity to leave her war-torn country. Once in Lebanon, she was subjected to sex trafficking along with more than 70 other women and girls, many of whom were also Syrian. The traffickers locked the girls in hotels and barred their windows. They subjected the women to sex trafficking for more than two months, sometimes forcing them to see 20 clients each day. The traffickers also raped and tortured the girls into submission. One day Angela and three others took advantage of a momentary lapse in security and escaped. They boarded a bus and confided in the driver. He reported the incident to the police, who raided the premises, helped release the other victims, and arrested 18 suspected traffickers. Authorities referred 35 of the victims to a women's shelter for assistance, while the others chose to return home.



indicate traffickers sometimes urge victims to request asylum upon arrival, which allows traffickers to exploit them as they await asylum decisions. Some international organizations report that the reliance by authorities on improvised shelters has led to an increase in human trafficking. Of equal concern, human traffickers have attempted to illegally recruit refugees at migrant reception centers for low-paid work and prostitution.

It is critical that governments and international organizations make every effort to identify and help trafficking victims among migrant populations. This can be accomplished by making efforts to ensure adequate staffing in centers and training immigration officials, including those charged with interviewing asylum applicants, to screen for indicators of trafficking. Another important opportunity for prevention is at ports of entry, where authorities can facilitate the distribution of information to migrants, including refugees, on the risks of human trafficking and available resources from governments, international organizations, and NGOs. Inspections at worksites employing foreign laborers, training for police on indicators of sex and labor trafficking, and providing refugees and asylum-seekers with opportunities to work are all worthy prevention efforts.

DISABILITY

Owing to cultural and societal stigmas, people with disabilities, including individuals with physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, behavioral, or other visible and invisible disabilities, often lack access to social support networks. Prejudices contribute to biases in law enforcement or judicial systems and often to unequal treatment by employers and government service agencies. Social support networks serve as one means by which persons with disabilities can pursue social and economic inclusion. Without these networks, and without effective enforcement of robust non-discrimination laws, fewer safeguards exist to protect against a variety of human rights abuses, including trafficking in persons.

Children and young adults with disabilities are especially vulnerable to the risks of human trafficking. Children with disabilities have been targeted by traffickers, for example, by being forced to beg because their disabilities—especially if highly visible—draw sympathy and charity from the public. In societies where children with disabilities are not expected to attend school, communities may be less likely to question why a disabled child is begging. All too often, young people with disabilities are regarded as undesirable and may even be subjected to trafficking by their own families. Children with less visible disabilities, such as cognitive or



A Burmese trafficking survivor displays scars on his shoulder from injuries he suffered while subjected to forced labor in Burma.

behavioral disabilities, are similarly at risk, as they also may be stigmatized by their families and communities, and may not be in school due to bias or lack of understanding of how to provide reasonable accommodations. Children with disabilities who do not participate fully in social or academic settings are more likely to be isolated from their communities, which may make them more vulnerable to trafficking.

Persons with disabilities also face many barriers to justice. Lack of training for police, prosecutors, and judges on how to accommodate persons with disabilities—for example, on providing physical access or sign language interpreters—can leave victims with disabilities unable to report their abuse or effectively participate in the criminal justice process. Lack of accessible information about judicial procedures and rights may also preclude them from approaching law enforcement or courts to report abuse; those who do may encounter social biases against the credibility of their statements and evidence. Reflecting such social biases, some countries have codified laws that prohibit persons with disabilities from testifying in court. Diminished access to the justice system and limited avenues of recourse to address abuse can empower traffickers to target persons with disabilities with a sense of impunity.

Governments can minimize these risks by outlawing discrimination, enhancing safeguards, and offering a wide range of community-based support services. Even in instances where trafficking victims do not have disabilities, the experience of being subjected to trafficking substantially increases the risk of victims acquiring disabilities as a result of physical and psychological trauma. It is, therefore, essential that victim service programs include resources for those with a wide range of disabilities.

STATELESSNESS

A stateless person is someone who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law. UNHCR estimates 10 million people, approximately one-third of whom are children, are stateless today. In many countries, stateless individuals lack identity documents, access to education, and economic opportunities. It is easier for unscrupulous employers to coerce undocumented workers into debt bondage or other exploitative conditions. Even if family members suspect or report a loved one has been subjected to human trafficking, it is difficult for authorities to trace an individual who lacks formal identity documents.

Some governments impose travel restrictions on stateless people, which—when coupled with their often dire economic situations and need to migrate for work—can push them to accept informal, sometimes fraudulent, job offers and to arrange transportation via middlemen and

smugglers. Using unscrupulous middlemen, who often charge exorbitant interest rates, can lead to debt bondage. In Burma, for example, the government denies citizenship to an estimated 810,000 men, women, and children—most of whom are ethnic Rohingya living in Rakhine State. Their lack of legal status and access to identity documents significantly increases this population's vulnerability to sex and labor trafficking. Rohingya have endured forced labor and dire social conditions within Burma. Many have fled, often with the help of smugglers, to neighboring countries, where some have been subjected to forced labor in agriculture, fishing, and domestic work.

Stateless populations encounter discrimination not only in their daily life, but also when interacting with law enforcement, which can significantly diminish their confidence in law enforcement and the justice system. As a result, stateless trafficking victims do not always report exploitative situations to the authorities, fearing either inaction or punishment. Some members of the Romani community, who became stateless following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, are penalized in Europe for committing crimes, such as petty theft, even when they do so as a result of being subjected to trafficking.

Until governments take measures to address and reduce statelessness, including registering and extending citizenship to stateless people, issuing identity documents, and developing programs to foster economic growth and trust between such groups and law enforcement, stateless people will continue to be vulnerable to trafficking in their own countries and abroad.

CONCLUSION

Although there is no exhaustive list of groups vulnerable to human trafficking, the experiences discussed above exemplify common challenges faced by populations at risk of modern slavery. Moreover, some individuals may be vulnerable for more than one reason, making their exploitation even more likely. Governments can take affirmative steps to consider those who may be uniquely vulnerable given their country's culture, social structure, and history, and ensure those groups have access to the protections necessary to keep them from being targeted for human trafficking.

CHILD SOLDIERS PREVENTION ACT LIST

The Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 (CSPA) was signed into law on December 23, 2008 (Title IV of Pub. L. 110-457), and took effect on June 21, 2009. The CSPA requires publication in the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* of a list of foreign governments identified during the previous year as having governmental armed forces or government-supported armed groups that recruit and use child soldiers, as defined in the act. These determinations cover the reporting period beginning April 1, 2015, and ending March 31, 2016.

“ They taught me how to hold the sword, and they told me how to hit. They told me it [the head of a doll] was the head of the infidels.”

- Habib, a 14-year-old Yezidi boy, on life in an ISIL training camp

For the purpose of the CSPA, and generally consistent with the provisions of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*, the term “child soldier” means:

- (i) any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities as a member of governmental armed forces;
- (ii) any person under 18 years of age who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces;
- (iii) any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces; or
- (iv) any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state.

The term “child soldier” includes any person described in clauses (ii), (iii), or (iv) who is serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a “cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard, or sex slave.”

Governments identified on the list are subject to restrictions, in the following fiscal year, on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment. The CSPA, as amended, prohibits assistance to governments that are identified in the list under the following authorities: International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Financing, Excess Defense Articles, and Peacekeeping Operations, with exceptions for some programs undertaken pursuant to the Peacekeeping Operations authority. The CSPA also prohibits the issuance of licenses for direct commercial sales of military equipment to such governments. Beginning October 1, 2016, and effective throughout Fiscal Year 2016, these restrictions will apply to the listed countries, absent a presidential national interest waiver, applicable exception, or reinstatement of assistance pursuant to the terms of the CSPA. The determination to include a government in the CSPA list is informed by a range of sources, including first-hand observation by U.S. government personnel and research and credible reporting from various UN entities, international organizations, local and international NGOs, and international media outlets.

The 2016 CSPA List includes governments in the following countries:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Burma | 6. Somalia |
| 2. Democratic Republic of the Congo | 7. South Sudan |
| 3. Iraq | 8. Sudan |
| 4. Nigeria | 9. Syria |
| 5. Rwanda | 10. Yemen |



Some government and government-supported militias in African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries force children to man checkpoints and serve as front-line soldiers, porters, domestic servants, and sex slaves to combatants. In addition to the imminent danger battle poses to children, some child soldiers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, drug addictions, and other physical and mental health problems after their release or escape from forced armed service.

AFGHANISTAN

In 2015 and 2016, the UN, *The New York Times* and other media outlets, and credible NGOs reported on the recruitment and sexual abuse of children under the age of 18 by the Afghanistan Local Police (ALP). Although the ALP is a government security force in Afghanistan, it falls outside of the armed forces of the country as defined by the CSPA. Though Afghanistan has not been listed under the CSPA, these incidents raise concerns regarding the protection of children and warrant further remedial action by the Government of Afghanistan.

PROTECTING VICTIMS FROM WRONGFUL PROSECUTION AND FURTHER VICTIMIZATION

“All I wanted to do was hide away from the world, but I still had a role to play. I had to be ‘Girl A’—the key witness in the trial that finally saw my abusers locked up. Girl A—the girl in the newspaper stories who had been through the most hideous experience imaginable. When I read those stories, I felt like I was reading about somebody else, another girl who was subjected to the depths of human depravity. But it wasn’t. It was about me. I am Girl A.”

– Girl A, United Kingdom

For years, the *Trafficking in Persons Report* has detailed the importance of protecting victims of human trafficking throughout the law enforcement process. A central tenet of the victim-centered approach is that victims of trafficking should not be held criminally responsible for their involvement in unlawful activities that are a direct consequence of their victimization.

At the heart of human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a person. Traffickers use the control they exercise over victims to force them to carry out activities for the traffickers’ profit. Traffickers often compel victims to engage in criminal activities such as prostitution, pick-pocketing, or drug trafficking and cultivation.

Law enforcement authorities often fail to properly screen and identify victims of human trafficking when they detain or arrest criminal suspects. This can result in a second victimization when victims are punished for their engagement in the crimes their traffickers forced them to commit.

UNITED STATES

Nina ran away from home at age 14. She met a woman who put her up in a hotel room and brought her “clients.” For the next 13 years, Nina had 20 different pimps who advertised her for sex on the internet and abused her verbally and physically. By the time she was finally referred to victim services, Nina had been convicted of 52 offenses, mostly prostitution—her first conviction at age 16—and spent time in both juvenile hall and jail.

Compounding the injustice, a criminal record can have a profoundly negative effect on victims throughout their lives—for example, a survivor of sex trafficking who cannot rent an apartment because of prior arrests for prostitution; or an individual forced by a criminal gang to steal or sell drugs who cannot get a job due to the resulting criminal record. Even if a trafficking victim never faces charges, or if charges are dropped, arrest records and stigma remain, affecting where victims live, their employment opportunities, and how others perceive them.

While the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* (Palermo Protocol) does not specifically address the non-criminalization of trafficking victims, article 2(b) states that one of the Protocol’s purposes is “to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights.” In addition, the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, which advises the Conference of the Parties to the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, recommended the following in 2009:

“With regard to ensuring the non-punishment and non-prosecution of trafficked persons, States parties should: (a) Establish appropriate procedures for identifying victims of trafficking in persons and for giving such victims support; (b) Consider, in line with their domestic legislation, not punishing or prosecuting trafficked persons for unlawful acts committed by them as a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons or where they were compelled to commit such unlawful acts....”

The Council of Europe and the EU have adopted instruments that recognize this non-punishment principle. Article 8 of the 2011 EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings provides:

“Member States shall, in accordance with the basic principles of their legal systems, take the necessary measures to ensure that the competent authorities are entitled not to prosecute or impose penalties on victims of trafficking in human beings for their involvement in criminal activities which they have been compelled to commit as a direct consequence of being subjected to any of the acts [i.e., offences concerning trafficking in human beings] referred to in Article 2.”

The non-binding 2013 Addendum to the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings of the OSCE states in Section IV, paragraph 2.6, under Access to justice and appropriate remedies:

“2.6 Taking adequate measures to ensure that, where appropriate, identified victims of THB [trafficking in human beings] are not penalized for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that they have been compelled to do so.”

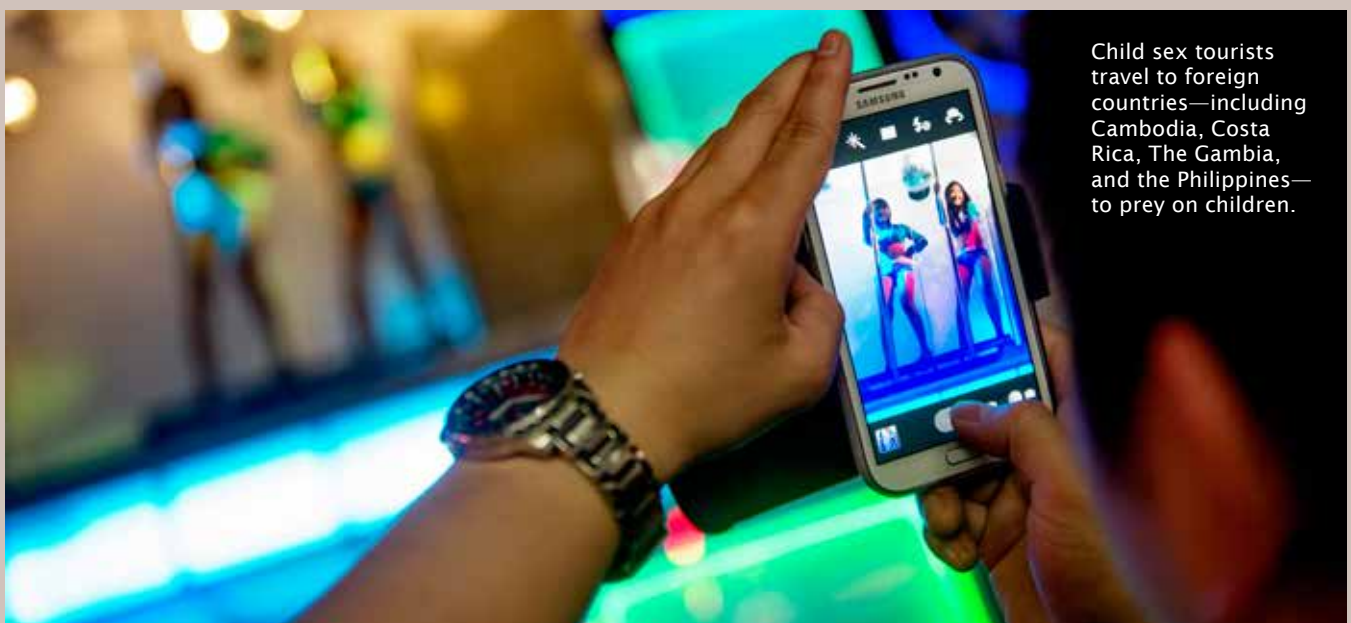
Effectively identifying trafficking victims, including among those who may have committed unlawful offenses, is key to a victim-centered approach. Victims of trafficking may be more likely to report their victimization if they were confident it would not lead to their arrest or prosecution. In turn, this would allow a government to better meet its obligations to provide protection and assistance to victims, as well as to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. Early identification of trafficking victims is essential to prevent further victimization and will help them start the recovery process as soon as possible.

VACATUR

In cases in which trafficking victims have records for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, such records should be vacated or expunged. In the United States, several states have enacted provisions that provide survivors the ability to seek a court order vacating or expunging criminal convictions entered against them that resulted from their trafficking situation. In 2010, New York became the first state to pass a law allowing survivors of trafficking to vacate their convictions for prostitution offenses. In 2013, Florida’s law went even further providing for the expungement of “any conviction for an offense committed while . . . a victim of human trafficking.”

Vacatur is the formal recognition of “factual innocence.” Vacatur laws should apply to both adults and children, given that anyone who has been forced, tricked, or coerced into criminal activity should not be considered as having consented to that activity. States should also ensure these laws cover convictions that encompass the wide variety of nonviolent crimes that victims are forced to commit.

These laws not only allow victims to correct past injustices, but also thereby help trafficking victims reclaim and rebuild their lives. Vacatur increases a survivor’s ability to find work, reducing their economic vulnerabilities and the risk of being re-trafficked. In the absence of a vacatur law, trafficking victims are condemned to being perpetually viewed as former criminals, which in numerous ways compromises their efforts to rebuild their lives.



Child sex tourists travel to foreign countries—including Cambodia, Costa Rica, The Gambia, and the Philippines—to prey on children.

INDIA

A recruiter came to Gina's rural village and told her mother he had a good job for Gina in Delhi that would earn her family a lot of money. Her mother let her go with the recruiter, but when they arrived in Delhi, Gina was sold into domestic servitude. She worked almost 20 hours each day for several years cooking meals, cleaning, providing childcare, and even massaging her employers' legs before she was allowed to sleep. After several years, Gina escaped and returned to her family.

Families in this Indian village are enslaved in the silk-dyeing industry, where each family is forcibly involved in a different aspect of making or dyeing silk.

THE PRICE OF ADVOCACY



“ We have no understanding of [our] ability to refuse to pick cotton. People who work in public institutions are those who are prepared to tolerate [forced work]. Of course no one wants to lose his job. The chief doctor tells us ‘I don’t send you to the fields of my own accord. I am also only carrying out orders.’ . . . He says he is required to fire any employee who refuses to work. ”

- A nurse forced to pick cotton in Uzbekistan

Activists often fight uphill battles—they champion causes and populations that lack attention and support from governments and the general public. In addition, they facilitate public discourse and advocate for positive change; however, this work does not come without a price. Around the world advocates face harassment, threats, and violence from criminals and government officials alike. Sometimes governments limit freedom of expression or censor media to hamper the ability of activists and journalists to report on such topics to broader audiences. Such harassment and impediments not only endanger advocates’ careers, lives, and families, but also deter others from speaking out.

Anti-trafficking and labor rights activists are no exception, especially in countries with governments that are not making significant efforts to combat trafficking, where freedom of expression, including for the press, is not protected, and where official complicity subverts efforts to bolster the rule of law. While anti-trafficking activists have faced discrimination and harassment in many countries, they have been targeted during the most recent reporting period in cases such as these:

Mauritania—In 2015, the government used tear gas to disperse a crowd peacefully protesting the forced labor of Mauritanian women in the Middle East and arrested nine participants.

Republic of the Congo—In 2015, a canister of tear gas exploded on the property of a leading anti-trafficking activist, resulting in the hospitalization of an infant and severe damage to the activist’s home and business. Witnesses reported the canister was launched from a police vehicle. The activist did not file an official report due to his distrust of the authorities and fear of retribution.

Thailand—In 2016, the government formalized stricter procedures for obtaining media visas, including requiring that foreign journalists be employed by a news agency registered with either the Thai or a foreign government, and prohibiting their engagement in work that may disrupt public order or harm the public. Activists fear these vague provisions could allow for government censorship of reporting that is critical of the government, including trafficking-related official complicity.

Uzbekistan—In 2015, authorities harassed and detained activists attempting to observe and document labor violations, including forced labor, during the cotton harvest, and at least two activists faced criminal charges.

To assist trafficking victims effectively, advocates, independent civil society groups, and the media need to be able to monitor human trafficking in sectors of concern.

WHAT IS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS?

“Trafficking in persons” and “human trafficking” have been used as umbrella terms for the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (the Palermo Protocol) describe this compelled service using a number of different terms, including involuntary servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor.

Human trafficking can include, but does not require, movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were exploited in their hometown, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers’ goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so.

THE FACE OF MODERN SLAVERY

SEX TRAFFICKING

When an adult engages in a commercial sex act, such as prostitution, as the result of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion or any combination of such means, that person is a victim of trafficking. Under such circumstances, perpetrators involved in recruiting, harboring, enticing, transporting, providing, obtaining, patronizing, soliciting, or maintaining a person for that purpose are guilty of sex trafficking of an adult. Sex trafficking also may occur within debt bondage, as individuals are compelled to continue in prostitution through the use of unlawful “debt,” purportedly incurred through their transportation, recruitment, or even their “sale”—which exploiters insist they must pay off before they can be free. An adult’s initial consent to participate in prostitution is not legally determinative: if one is thereafter held in service through psychological manipulation or physical force, he or she is a trafficking victim and should receive benefits outlined in the Palermo Protocol and applicable domestic laws.

CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

When a child (younger than 18 years of age) is recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained, patronized, solicited, or maintained to perform a commercial sex act, proving force, fraud, or coercion is not necessary for the offense to be characterized as human trafficking. There are no exceptions to this rule: no cultural or socioeconomic rationalizations alter the fact that children who are exploited in prostitution are trafficking victims. The use of children in the commercial sex trade is prohibited under U.S. law and by statute in most countries around the world. Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for children, including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (including HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, malnutrition, social ostracism, and even death.

FORCED LABOR

Forced labor, sometimes also referred to as labor trafficking, encompasses the range of activities—recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining—involved when a person uses force or physical threats, psychological coercion, abuse of the legal process, deception, or other coercive means

to compel someone to work. Once a person's labor is exploited by such means, the person's prior consent to work for an employer is legally irrelevant: the employer is a trafficker and the employee is a trafficking victim. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to this form of human trafficking, but individuals also may be forced into labor in their own countries. Female victims of forced or bonded labor, especially women and girls in domestic servitude, are often sexually exploited as well.

BONDED LABOR OR DEBT BONDAGE

One form of coercion is the use of a bond or debt. Some workers inherit debt; for example, in South Asia it is estimated that there are millions of trafficking victims working to pay off their ancestors' debts. Others fall victim to traffickers or recruiters who unlawfully exploit an initial debt assumed, wittingly or unwittingly, as a term of employment. Debts taken on by migrant laborers in their countries of origin, often with the involvement of labor agencies and employers in the destination country, can also contribute to a situation of debt bondage. Such circumstances may occur in the context of employment-based temporary work programs in which a worker's legal status in the destination country is tied to the employer and workers fear seeking redress.

DOMESTIC SERVITUDE

Involuntary domestic servitude is a form of human trafficking found in unique circumstances—work in a private residence—that create distinct vulnerabilities for victims. It is a crime in which domestic workers are not free to leave their employment and are abused and underpaid, if paid at all. Many domestic workers do not receive the basic benefits and protections commonly extended to other groups of workers—things as simple as a day off. Moreover, their ability to move freely is often limited, and employment in private homes increases their vulnerability and isolation. Authorities cannot inspect homes as easily as formal workplaces and, in many other cases, do not have the mandate or capacity to do so. In addition to facing involuntary servitude, domestic workers, especially women, confront various forms of abuse, harassment, and exploitation, including sexual and gender-based violence.

FORCED CHILD LABOR

Although children may legally engage in certain forms of work, children can also be found in slavery or slavery-like situations. Some indicators of forced labor of a child include situations in which the child appears to be in the custody of a non-family member who requires the child to perform work that financially benefits someone outside the child's family and does not offer the child the option of leaving. Anti-trafficking responses should supplement, not replace, traditional actions against child labor, such as remediation and education. When children are enslaved, their abusers should not escape criminal punishment which can occur when governments impose weaker administrative responses to such abusive child labor practices.

UNLAWFUL RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Child soldiering is a manifestation of human trafficking when it involves the unlawful recruitment or use of children—through force, fraud, or coercion—by armed forces as combatants or other forms of labor. Some child soldiers are also sexually exploited by armed groups. Perpetrators may be government armed forces, paramilitary organizations, or rebel groups. Many children are forcibly abducted to be used as combatants. Others are made to work as porters, cooks, guards, servants, messengers, or spies. Young girls can be forced to marry or have sex with commanders and male combatants. Both male and female child soldiers are often sexually abused.

In Senegal, young students (*talibes*) attending Koranic schools (*daaras*) run by teachers known as *marabouts* are forced to beg instead of receiving an education. In the Dakar region alone, approximately 30,000 *talibes* are forced to beg in the streets, and the problem is growing.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CONFLICT ZONES

“ We slept on the ground. We had to loot villages to eat. We were drugged to remain obedient. We were forced to kill. When I was in the armed group, I committed violence and crimes. I lost my childhood, my friends, and my mother. ”

– Martin, former child soldier
in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Armed conflict amplifies the risks of human trafficking for vulnerable populations by increasing economic desperation, weakening rule of law, decreasing the availability of social services, and forcing people to flee for their safety. Armed conflict often results in broken governments, judicial systems, job markets, and community support structures that would normally offer citizens protection from disasters and crime, including human trafficking. Many contributing factors, such as high unemployment rates, homelessness, limited social services, and weak law enforcement oversight, are amplified in conflict zones and exploited by traffickers. Without formal options and services to maintain their livelihoods, people are more likely to resort to illicit activities or risky, informal means to survive—sectors in which traffickers thrive.

During armed conflicts, governments divert existing resources to respond to the imminent crisis with a resulting loss in facilities and personnel for peacetime governmental services. This exacerbates existing limitations and creates new gaps in a government’s structures to protect and provide for its citizens. Some militias use human trafficking to generate income and obtain new combatants. Young women and girls are often forced to marry or have sex with commanders and male combatants. The national and civil disorder caused by such conflict make traffickers’ recruitment tactics—including false offers of jobs, shelter, or education—more enticing to vulnerable populations.


Armed conflict can break down government institutions and create a climate of impunity that encourages traffickers to prey on vulnerable populations. Women and children, migrants, and internally displaced persons are among those most at risk of being subjected to trafficking in conflict zones. The terrorist organization Boko Haram, for example, has abducted and forced women and children into sexual slavery in Nigeria, and the Somali National Army continues to recruit children into combat.

Camps for refugees and internally displaced persons are prime targets for traffickers. The concentration of vulnerable, displaced people, combined with a lack of security, services, and oversight typically found in such camps, make them ideal locations for traffickers to operate. In long-standing camps, traffickers are able to build relationships with corrupt camp officials and establish trafficking rings.

Human trafficking is frequently overlooked in crises and omitted from formulations of humanitarian and emergency response policies. Trafficking operations can flourish amidst international reconstruction efforts where there are few government institutions or rule of law. The international community and individual countries must recognize labor and sex trafficking as a common occurrence during conflict and include anti-trafficking strategies in humanitarian responses.

The International
Labour Organization
captured this portrait
of a freed Nigerian
slave.



A young boy with a somber expression is shown from the chest up, carrying a large, heavy bundle of harvested tobacco leaves on his back. The bundle is secured with several wooden poles and white ties. He is wearing a light green, short-sleeved button-down shirt. The background consists of lush green tobacco plants with large, serrated leaves. The sky is overcast and grey.

Malawian child trafficking victims are transported from the south to the central and northern regions of the country for forced labor in agriculture, predominantly in the tobacco industry. An international organization reported children who are forced to work in tobacco fields in lieu of attending school have increased rates of hunger and stunted growth, among other health problems.



Thai and Burmese fishermen are detained behind bars in the compound of a fishing company in Benjina, Indonesia. The imprisoned men were considered slaves who might run away. They said they lived on a few bites of rice and curry a day and were confined to a space barely big enough to lie down until the next trawler came and the traffickers forced them back to sea.

OUT OF SIGHT: HOW ISOLATION CONTRIBUTES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“ We didn’t have time to sleep. We didn’t have time to eat. We only had time to work. ”

– Forced labor victim in the fishing industry

Working in isolation can mean having little to no governmental oversight, a lack of community support, and access to fewer protective services, legal advocates, and law enforcement personnel. Such isolation increases workers’ vulnerability to human trafficking and associated indicators, including confiscation of passports or other identity documents, non-payment of wages, substandard living and working conditions, restricted movement, threats of deportation, psychological coercion to remain employed, and physical force.

There are several industries in which these circumstances are evident. Malaysia and Indonesia, two of the largest producers of palm oil in the world, attract thousands of migrant workers to their year-round harvesting, production, and export operations. The plantations are often situated in difficult-to-reach parts of both countries, which enable unscrupulous owners and managers to operate with impunity and subject employees to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Some employers have confiscated passports and other identity documents and placed their workers in situations of debt bondage.

Fishers aboard vessels in vast international waters are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking due to often protracted periods of time at sea and an inability to report mistreatment or escape their ships. Luring fishers with promises of good wages, traffickers force some to work under extreme conditions and deny them compensation or the freedom to leave. Similar conditions enable forced child labor in the Lake Volta region in central Ghana.

West African countries, such as Mali and Senegal, have artisanal gold mines that draw transient communities to live and work. Mines are typically located within vast and remote areas and government officials face capacity constraints to make routine monitoring visits. The journey from population centers to these mines is lengthy and arduous. These conditions also increase the likelihood officials will seek to profit from or simply ignore exploitative conditions.

The isolation of extractive industries coupled with the influx of large numbers of male workers also drives the demand for commercial sex. For example, Bolivian and Peruvian girls are subjected to sex trafficking in mining and logging areas in Peru, and women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking

near gold mines in Suriname and Guyana.

Even in urban areas conditions of isolation can be found in the workplace. For instance, domestic workers are often compelled to work in homes with severely restricted freedoms and often subjected to sexual abuse. Cultural isolation can also facilitate the exploitation of foreign migrant workers who may not speak the local language or understand their rights and the protections available to them under local law.

Traffickers take advantage of work settings that are culturally isolated or physically remote to compel adults and children to work in unsafe and often abusive settings and exploit others in sex trafficking. Anti-trafficking strategies should address the unique risks workers face in settings that are isolated from the public, from law enforcement, and from their traditional support networks.

BANGLADESH | THAILAND | MALAYSIA

Maruf, striving for financial independence, and 200 others accepted an offer to be smuggled by boat to Malaysia for well-paid work. The agent promised food and water during the journey and said the men could repay the cost with their future wages. The agent lied; the crew rationed food and water, beat those who asked for more, and took the passengers to a Thai smuggling camp. After smugglers forced his father to pay a ransom, Maruf was released and brought to Malaysia. Maruf found work on a palm oil plantation through a contracting company but was again deceived. The contracting company confiscated the workers’ passports, and Maruf worked every day without pay as his contractor withheld his wages to pay back recruitment fees. Maruf was in the country illegally and feared arrest if he reported the abuse, so he continued to work and hoped to be paid eventually.

METHODOLOGY

The Department of State prepared this report using information from U.S. embassies, government officials, nongovernmental and international organizations, published reports, news articles, academic studies, research trips to every region of the world, and information submitted to tipreport@state.gov. This email address provides a means by which organizations and individuals can share information with the Department of State on government progress in addressing trafficking in persons.

U.S. diplomatic posts and domestic agencies reported on the trafficking situation and governmental action to fight trafficking based on thorough research that included meetings with a wide variety of government officials, local and international NGO representatives, officials of international organizations, journalists, academics, and survivors. U.S. missions overseas are dedicated to tracking and pressing for progress on human trafficking issues year-round. The 2016 *Trafficking in Persons Report* covers government efforts undertaken from April 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016.

CANADA

Holly, 13 years old, didn't recognize Emilie on Facebook, but seeing they had mutual friends, accepted her friend request. Holly and Emilie chatted and quickly became online friends. One day Emilie told Holly that her boyfriend had found them both jobs that would make them a lot of money. Emilie asked Holly to come to her apartment that weekend. When Holly arrived, Emilie, her boyfriend, and another man told Holly she had to have sex with men for money. When Holly refused, they threatened to hurt her. They posted photos of Holly on an escort website and took her to different cities around Canada to have sex with paying clients. One day, when Emilie's boyfriend left the room, Holly fled and received help from a passerby. All three perpetrators have been charged with numerous crimes, including sex trafficking, and await trial.

“I cried and asked to go back to the agency, but madam said ‘I already bought you’...”

- Dina, a 23-year-old Indonesian domestic worker in Dubai

TIER PLACEMENT

The Department places each country in this report onto one of four tiers, as mandated by the TVPA. This placement is based more on the extent of government action to combat trafficking than on the size of the country's problem. The analyses are based on the extent of governments' efforts measured against the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking (see page 46), which are generally consistent with the Palermo Protocol.

While Tier 1 is the highest ranking, it does not mean that a country has no human trafficking problem or that it is doing enough to address the problem. Rather, a Tier 1 ranking indicates that a government has acknowledged the existence of human trafficking, has made efforts to address the problem, and meets the TVPA's minimum standards. Each year, governments need to demonstrate appreciable progress in combating trafficking to maintain a Tier 1 ranking. Indeed, Tier 1 represents a responsibility rather than a reprieve.

Tier rankings and narratives in the 2016 *Trafficking in Persons Report* reflect an assessment of the following:

- » enactment of laws prohibiting severe forms of trafficking in persons, as defined by the TVPA, and provision of criminal punishments for trafficking offenses;
- » criminal penalties prescribed for human trafficking offenses with a maximum of at least four years' deprivation of liberty, or a more severe penalty;
- » implementation of human trafficking laws through vigorous prosecution of the prevalent forms of trafficking in the country and sentencing of offenders;
- » proactive victim identification measures with systematic procedures to guide law enforcement and other government-supported front-line responders in the process of victim identification;
- » government funding and partnerships with NGOs to provide victims access to primary health care, counseling, and shelter, allowing them to recount their trafficking experiences to trained social counselors and law enforcement in an environment of minimal pressure;

- » victim protection efforts that include access to services and shelter without detention and with legal alternatives to removal to countries in which victims would face retribution or hardship;
- » the extent to which a government ensures victims are provided with legal and other assistance and that, consistent with domestic law, proceedings are not prejudicial to victims' rights, dignity, or psychological well-being;
- » the extent to which a government ensures the safe, humane, and to the extent possible, voluntary repatriation and reintegration of victims;
- » governmental measures to prevent human trafficking, including efforts to curb practices identified as contributing factors to human trafficking, such as employers' confiscation of foreign workers' passports and allowing labor recruiters to charge prospective migrants excessive fees; and
- » government efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and international sex tourism.

Tier rankings and narratives are NOT affected by the following:

- » efforts, however laudable, undertaken exclusively by non-governmental actors in the country;
- » general public awareness events—government-sponsored or otherwise—lacking concrete ties to the prosecution of traffickers, protection of victims, or prevention of trafficking; and
- » broad-based law enforcement or developmental initiatives.



VICARIOUS TRAUMA

“ I am so grateful. I don't know all the people. I want to tell them all thank you for helping us, because I know that they don't only help me but all the other people, too. I want to tell them that the services have helped me a lot, a lot, a lot. I felt like I was in a hole, without exit—in a well with no way out—and they helped me to get out. ”

– Trafficking survivor

Trauma associated with human trafficking can be devastating and lasting, as many victims suffer psychological and physical abuse at the hands of traffickers. Related trauma can also significantly affect the physical and emotional well-being of the professionals who assist and care for trafficking victims. This vicarious trauma, also referred to as compassion fatigue or secondary traumatic stress, refers to the negative reactions that can occur when professionals repeatedly witness or hear about victims' difficult experiences of trauma, violence, and abuse. The signs of vicarious trauma resemble post-traumatic stress disorder, and can include emotional, behavioral, and physical symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, change in appetite, irritability, nightmares, loss of empathy, and numbness.

Direct service providers, social workers, shelter staff, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, interpreters, and others involved in various aspects of providing care to a victim or handling a trafficking case, are especially vulnerable to experiencing vicarious trauma.

To minimize the risk of vicarious trauma, it is important for anti-trafficking professionals to take steps to develop self-awareness and establish healthy coping mechanisms. Common questions to check for symptoms of vicarious trauma include:

- » How are you physically and emotionally affected by your work?
- » How well are you able to separate work from the rest of your life?
- » What is it like and how do you feel when hearing about a specific trafficking case?
- » Do you have signs of vicarious trauma or other forms of stress?
- » What kind of self-care are you practicing? Is it helping?

Healthy coping mechanisms for professionals in the anti-trafficking field should include organizational policies and individual self-care strategies. A few strategies include:

- » Develop self-care and stress management strategies, e.g., exercise, build a strong social or community network, practice relaxation techniques, make time for extracurricular activities, etc.
- » Establish formal support structures at work.
- » Seek out support among peers in other organizations.
- » Talk with a mental health professional (individual and group counseling).
- » Establish professional boundaries.
- » Participate in capacity building and training.



A GUIDE TO THE TIERS

TIER 1

The governments of countries that fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

TIER 2

The governments of countries that do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to meet those standards.

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

The government of countries that do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards, and for which:

- a) the *absolute number* of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- b) there is a failure to provide evidence of *increasing efforts* to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes; increased assistance to victims; and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take *additional steps over the next year*.

TIER 3

The governments of countries that do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

The TVPA lists additional factors to consider in determining whether a country should be on Tier 2 (or Tier 2 Watch List) versus Tier 3. First, the extent to which the country is a country of origin, transit, or destination for severe forms of trafficking. Second, the extent to which the country's government does not meet the TVPA's minimum standards and, in particular, the extent to which officials or government employees have been complicit in severe forms of trafficking. And third, reasonable measures that the government would need to undertake to be in compliance with the minimum standards in light of the government's resources and capabilities to address and eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

A 2008 amendment to the TVPA provides that any country that has been ranked Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years and that would otherwise be ranked Tier 2 Watch List for the next year will instead be ranked Tier 3 in that third year.

This automatic downgrade provision came into effect for the first time in the 2013 Report. The Secretary of State is authorized to waive the automatic downgrade based on credible evidence that a waiver is justified because the government has devoted sufficient resources to a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute making significant efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The Secretary can only issue this waiver for two consecutive years. After the third year, a country must either go up to Tier 2 or down to Tier 3. Governments subject to the automatic downgrade provision are noted as such in the country narratives.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS FOR TIER 3 COUNTRIES

Pursuant to the TVPA, governments of countries on Tier 3 may be subject to certain restrictions on assistance, whereby the President may determine not to provide U.S. government non-humanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance. In addition, the President may determine to withhold funding for government official or employee participation in educational and cultural

UGANDA | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

When Sanyu's friend moved from Uganda to UAE, she told Sanyu she had found her a job that would even cover her travel expenses. Sanyu agreed to join her friend. Only a few days after arriving in Dubai, her friend disappeared and Sanyu's situation changed drastically. A woman came to Sanyu's house and demanded Sanyu repay her for covering her travel expenses. The woman explained Sanyu would need to sell herself for sex. When Sanyu resisted, the traffickers tortured her, denied her food, and made her sleep outside for three weeks. She was trapped in a house with 14 other girls from Uganda and forced to have sex for money. Sanyu and two other girls escaped and returned to Uganda.

exchange programs for certain Tier 3 countries. Consistent with the TVPA, the President may also determine to instruct the U.S. Executive Director of each multilateral development bank and the International Monetary Fund to vote against and use his or her best efforts to deny any loans or other uses of the institutions' funds to a designated Tier 3 country for most purpose (except for humanitarian, trade-related, and certain development-related assistance). Alternatively, the President may waive application of the foregoing restrictions upon a determination that the provision to a Tier 3 country of such assistance would promote the purposes of the TVPA or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States. The TVPA also authorizes the President to waive funding restrictions if necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations, including women and children.

Applicable funding restrictions apply for the next Fiscal Year, which begins October 1, 2016.

No tier ranking is permanent. Every country, including the United States, can do more. All countries must maintain and continually increase efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

BURMA-THAILAND

Shindy believed she was leaving Burma for a well-paying job at a Thai seafood factory. She owed a 12,000 baht (\$342) recruitment fee, but believed she could pay it back earning the Thai minimum wage of 300 baht (\$8.50) per day. After arriving; however, the middleman said Shindy owed him 20,000 baht and would only earn 200 baht per day. She and approximately 40 other Burmese laborers worked 18 hours each day and had to spend almost all of their earnings to buy overpriced food from the on-site store. One worker escaped and told an NGO about Shindy and the other workers trapped at the factory. The NGO and Thai authorities returned to the factory to free the workers and their families, some of whom had been captive for three years.

GLOBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2003 added to the original law a new requirement that foreign governments provide the Department of State with data on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences in order to fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (Tier 1). The 2004 *TIP Report* collected this data for the first time. The 2007 *TIP Report* showed for the first time a breakout of the number of total prosecutions and convictions that related to labor trafficking, placed in parentheses.

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2008	5,212 (312)	2,983 (104)	30,961	26
2009	5,606 (432)	4,166 (335)	49,105	33
2010	6,017 (607)	3,619 (237)	33,113	17
2011	7,909 (456)	3,969 (278)	42,291 (15,205)	15
2012	7,705 (1,153)	4,746 (518)	46,570 (17,368)	21
2013	9,460 (1,199)	5,776 (470)	44,758 (10,603)	58
2014	10,051 (418)	4,443 (216)	44,462 (11,438)	20
2015	18,930 (857)	6,609 (456)	77,823 (14,262)	30

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources. Prosecution and victim identification data reported this year are higher than in previous years, in large part due to increased information sharing and better data quality from several governments

THE U.S. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On December 16, 2015, President Obama announced the historic appointment of 11 members to the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. Each member is a survivor of human trafficking, and together they represent a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. The Council, established by the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, enacted on May 29, 2015, provides a formal platform for trafficking survivors to advise and make recommendations on federal anti-trafficking policies to the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (PITF).

The Advisory Council participated in the January 5, 2016, meeting of the PITF. Ms. Ima Matul Maisaroh spoke to the PITF on behalf of the Council, saying:

One key reason this Council is important is because it acknowledges the value that survivors add to any initiative on human trafficking. As a collective group of survivors, we have dedicated a huge part of ourselves to the anti-trafficking movement through our respective advocacy efforts. Together, we are changing perceptions, fighting for justice, and ultimately, over the years, contributing to one shared goal—to end modern slavery everywhere it exists.

We are a diverse group. Our individual experiences as survivors will add a richness of expertise to the Council, and we will act proudly as a unified group of leaders who will speak up for what is needed to address the many issues that contribute to the long-standing existence of human trafficking in the United States and around the world.

The first members of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, who are serving two-year terms, are: Evelyn Chumbow, Harold d'Souza, Minh Dang, Tina Frundt, Ima Matul Maisaroh, Ronny Marty, Flor Molina, Bukola Love Oriola, Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman, Sheila White, and Shandra Woworuntu.



On January 5, 2016, the Advisory Council met with Secretary Kerry and participated in the meeting of the PITF.

In April 2016, the Advisory Council met with Ambassador Susan Coppedge of the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and other federal agencies in preparation for its first annual report to Congress.





In Nepal, Nepali and Indian children are victims of bonded labor in brick kilns and the stone-breaking industry, in addition to other sectors. Nepalis living in areas affected by the April 2015 earthquake that struck Nepal are especially vulnerable to trafficking.

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ADDRESSES HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“The Islamic State didn’t come to kill the women and girls, but to use us as spoils of war, as objects to be sold . . . or to be gifted for free,” said Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a Yezidi survivor of human trafficking. Her powerful first-hand testimony on December 16, 2015, moved all those present at the United Nations Security Council’s (UNSC) first session to address human trafficking. Ms. Murad urged the Council to recognize the actions of Da’esh as genocide, to “find a way to open a case before the International Criminal Court,” to rescue the thousands of Yezidi women and children held in captivity, to provide a safe haven for Yezidis and other threatened minority groups, and to establish an international victims compensation fund.

The UNSC’s Presidential Statement condemned the actions of Da’esh, called for states to hold accountable those who engage in trafficking, and expressed solidarity with the victims, including in situations of conflict. The UNSC urged all relevant UN agencies operating in conflict and post-conflict situations to assess instances of human trafficking, proactively screen for potential trafficking victims, and facilitate their access to services.

Since her brave testimony before the UNSC, Nadia has become a clear voice in her community and on behalf of victims of human trafficking in conflict situations around the world.

Nadia addresses
the United Nations
Security Council on
December 16, 2015.







Corrupt employers all around the world—including recruitment agencies and local middlemen—use recruitment fees, passport retention, contract fraud, and contract-switching to trap migrant workers in forced labor or debt bondage in the construction sector.

TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT: MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS


Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, Div. A of Pub. L. No. 106-386, § 108, as amended.

- (1) The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.
- (2) For the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child incapable of giving meaningful consent, or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death, the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault.
- (3) For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.
- (4) The government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

INDICIA OF “SERIOUS AND SUSTAINED EFFORTS”

- (1) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates and prosecutes acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and convicts and sentences persons responsible for such acts, that take place wholly or partly within the territory of the country, including, as appropriate, requiring incarceration of individuals convicted of such acts. For purposes of the preceding sentence, suspended or significantly reduced sentences for convictions of principal actors in cases of severe forms of trafficking in persons shall be considered, on a case-by-case basis, whether to be considered as an indicator of serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data, consistent with the capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and on June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.
- (2) Whether the government of the country protects victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons and encourages their assistance in the investigation and prosecution of such trafficking, including provisions for legal alternatives to their removal to countries in which they would face retribution or hardship, and ensures that victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked, including by providing training to law enforcement and immigration officials regarding the identification and treatment of trafficking victims using approaches that focus on the needs of the victims.
- (3) Whether the government of the country has adopted measures to prevent severe forms of trafficking in persons, such as measures to inform and educate the public, including potential victims, about the causes and consequences of severe forms of trafficking in persons, measures to establish the identity of local populations, including birth registration, citizenship, and nationality, measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, a transparent system for remediating or punishing such public officials as a deterrent, measures to prevent the use of forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards, effective bilateral, multilateral, or regional information sharing and cooperation arrangements with other countries, and effective policies or laws regulating foreign labor recruiters and holding them civilly and criminally liable for fraudulent recruiting.
- (4) Whether the government of the country cooperates with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of severe forms of trafficking in persons and has entered into bilateral, multilateral, or regional law enforcement cooperation and coordination arrangements with other countries.


- (5) Whether the government of the country extradites persons charged with acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons on substantially the same terms and to substantially the same extent as persons charged with other serious crimes (or, to the extent such extradition would be inconsistent with the laws of such country or with international agreements to which the country is a party, whether the government is taking all appropriate measures to modify or replace such laws and treaties so as to permit such extradition).
- (6) Whether the government of the country monitors immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of severe forms of trafficking in persons and whether law enforcement agencies of the country respond to any such evidence in a manner that is consistent with the vigorous investigation and prosecution of acts of such trafficking, as well as with the protection of human rights of victims and the internationally recognized human right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's own country.
- (7) Whether the government of the country vigorously investigates, prosecutes, convicts, and sentences public officials, including diplomats and soldiers, who participate in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons, including nationals of the country who are deployed abroad as part of a diplomatic, peacekeeping, or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, and takes all appropriate measures against officials who condone such trafficking. A government's failure to appropriately address public allegations against such public officials, especially once such officials have returned to their home countries, shall be considered inaction under these criteria. After reasonable requests from the Department of State for data regarding such investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences, a government which does not provide such data consistent with its resources shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts. During the periods prior to the annual report submitted on June 1, 2004, and June 1, 2005, and the periods afterwards until September 30 of each such year, the Secretary of State may disregard the presumption contained in the preceding sentence if the government has provided some data to the Department of State regarding such acts and the Secretary has determined that the government is making a good faith effort to collect such data.
- (8) Whether the percentage of victims of severe forms of trafficking in the country that are non-citizens of such countries is insignificant.
- (9) Whether the government has entered into effective, transparent partnerships, cooperative arrangements, or agreements that have resulted in concrete and measurable outcomes with
 - (A) domestic civil society organizations, private sector entities, or international nongovernmental organizations, or into multilateral or regional arrangements or agreements, to assist the government's efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and punish traffickers; or
 - (B) the United States toward agreed goals and objectives in the collective fight against trafficking.
- (10) Whether the government of the country, consistent with the capacity of such government, systematically monitors its efforts to satisfy the criteria described in paragraphs (1) through (8) and makes available publicly a periodic assessment of such efforts.
- (11) Whether the government of the country achieves appreciable progress in eliminating severe forms of trafficking when compared to the assessment in the previous year.
- (12) Whether the government of the country has made serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for
 - (A) commercial sex acts; and
 - (B) participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country.



“ Not everybody gets a chance to be a survivor, and there are girls out there right now that don't even know that they're victims ... But maybe, just maybe, they'll see one of us and they'll hear one of us and they'll know that there is help, there is hope and there is a way out. ”

- Angela Ritter, survivor of trafficking





A former enslaved fisherman is reunited with his mother after 22 years of forced labor aboard fishing vessels in Southeast Asia. When he accepted the initial job offer in 1993, the fisherman did not know he was beginning a journey that would take him thousands of miles away from his family, that he would miss births and deaths, or that he would run away twice from forced labor on fishing vessels. On the day he left home in 1993, all he saw was promise.

THE TIERS

TIER 1

Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

TIER 2

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards.

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards AND:

- a) The **absolute number of victims** of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- b) There is a **failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts** to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards was based on **commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.**

TIER 3

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1

ARMENIA	CZECH REPUBLIC	ITALY	SLOVAKIA
AUSTRALIA	DENMARK	KOREA, SOUTH	SLOVENIA
AUSTRIA	FINLAND	LITHUANIA	SPAIN
THE BAHAMAS	FRANCE	NETHERLANDS	ST. MAARTEN
BELGIUM	GEORGIA	NEW ZEALAND	SWEDEN
CANADA	GERMANY	NORWAY	SWITZERLAND
CHILE	ICELAND	PHILIPPINES	TAIWAN
COLOMBIA	IRELAND	POLAND	UNITED KINGDOM
CYPRUS	ISRAEL	PORTUGAL	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TIER 2

ALBANIA	EGYPT	LATVIA	NIGERIA
ANGOLA	EL SALVADOR	LEBANON	PALAU
ARGENTINA	ESTONIA	LESOTHO	PANAMA
ARUBA	ETHIOPIA	LIBERIA	PARAGUAY
AZERBAIJAN	FJI	LUXEMBOURG	PERU
BAHRAIN	GREECE	MACAU	ROMANIA
BANGLADESH	GUATEMALA	MACEDONIA	SIERRA LEONE
BARBADOS	GUYANA	MADAGASCAR	SINGAPORE
BHUTAN	HONDURAS	MALAWI	SOUTH AFRICA
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	HUNGARY	MALTA	TAJIKISTAN
BOTSWANA	INDIA	MAURITIUS	TIMOR-LESTE
BRAZIL	INDONESIA	MEXICO	TOGO
BRUNEI	IRAQ	MICRONESIA	TURKEY
BURKINA FASO	JAMAICA	MOLDOVA	UGANDA
CAMBODIA	JAPAN	MONGOLIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
CHAD	JORDAN	MONTENEGRO	URUGUAY
CROATIA	KAZAKHSTAN	MOROCCO	VIETNAM
CURAÇAO	KENYA	NAMIBIA	ZAMBIA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	KOSOVO	NEPAL	
ECUADOR	KYRGYZSTAN	NICARAGUA	

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

AFGHANISTAN	COTE D'IVOIRE	MALI	SOLOMON ISLANDS
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	CUBA	MOZAMBIQUE	SRI LANKA
BENIN	GABON	NIGER	ST. LUCIA
BOLIVIA	GHANA	OMAN	ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES
BULGARIA	GUINEA	PAKISTAN	SWAZILAND
CABO VERDE	HONG KONG	QATAR	TANZANIA
CAMEROON	KIRIBATI	RWANDA	THAILAND
CHINA (PRC)	KUWAIT	SAUDI ARABIA	TONGA
CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REP. OF	LAOS	SENEGAL	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
CONGO, REPUBLIC OF	MALAYSIA	SERBIA	TUNISIA
COSTA RICA	MALDIVES	SEYCHELLES	UKRAINE

TIER 3

ALGERIA	DJIBOUTI	KOREA, NORTH	SURINAME
BELARUS	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	MARSHALL ISLANDS	SYRIA
BELIZE	ERITREA	MAURITANIA	TURKMENISTAN
BURMA	THE GAMBIA	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	UZBEKISTAN
BURUNDI	GUINEA-BISSAU	RUSSIA	VENEZUELA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	HAITI	SOUTH SUDAN	ZIMBABWE
COMOROS	IRAN	SUDAN	

SPECIAL CASE

LIBYA	YEMEN
SOMALIA	



Boundary representation is not authoritative.

AFRICA

TIER PLACEMENTS

■ TIER 1
 ■ TIER 2
 ■ TIER 2 WATCH LIST
 ■ TIER 3
 ■ SPECIAL CASE

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	325 (47)	117 (30)	10,861	8
2010	272 (168)	163 (113)	9,626	5
2011	340 (45)	217 (113)	8,900 (5,098)	2
2012	493 (273)	252 (177)	10,043 (6,544)	4
2013	572 (245)	341 (192)	10,096 (2,250)	7
2014	811 (49)	317 (33)	9,523 (1,308)	4
2015	1,517 (53)	719 (8)	12,125 (3,531)	6

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources.



TIER PLACEMENTS



YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	357 (113)	256 (72)	5,238	3
2010	427 (53)	177 (9)	2,597	0
2011	2,127 (55)	978 (55)	8,454 (3,140)	4
2012	1,682 (115)	1,251 (103)	8,521 (1,804)	4
2013	2,460 (188)	1,271 (39)	7,886 (1,077)	3
2014	1,938 (88)	969 (16)	6,349 (1,084)	3
2015	3,281 (193)	1,730 (130)	13,990 (3,533)	10

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources. Prosecution and victim identification data reported this year are higher than in previous years, in large part due to increased information sharing and better data quality from several governments



Boundary representation is not authoritative.

ARUBA*
CURAÇAO*
ST. MAARTEN*
Islands not shown to scale or relative position.

* Islands in the Caribbean Sea—although part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten are covered by the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

TIER PLACEMENTS

- TIER 1
- TIER 2
- TIER 2 WATCH LIST
- TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	2,208 (160)	1,733 (149)	14,650	14
2010	2,803 (47)	1,850 (38)	8,548	4
2011	3,188 (298)	1,601 (81)	10,185 (1,796)	2
2012	3,161 (361)	1,818 (112)	11,905 (2,306)	3
2013	3,223 (275)	2,684 (127)	10,374 (1,863)	35
2014	4,199 (197)	1,585 (69)	11,910 (3,531)	5
2015	4,990 (272)	1,692 (245)	11,112 (3,733)	8

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources.

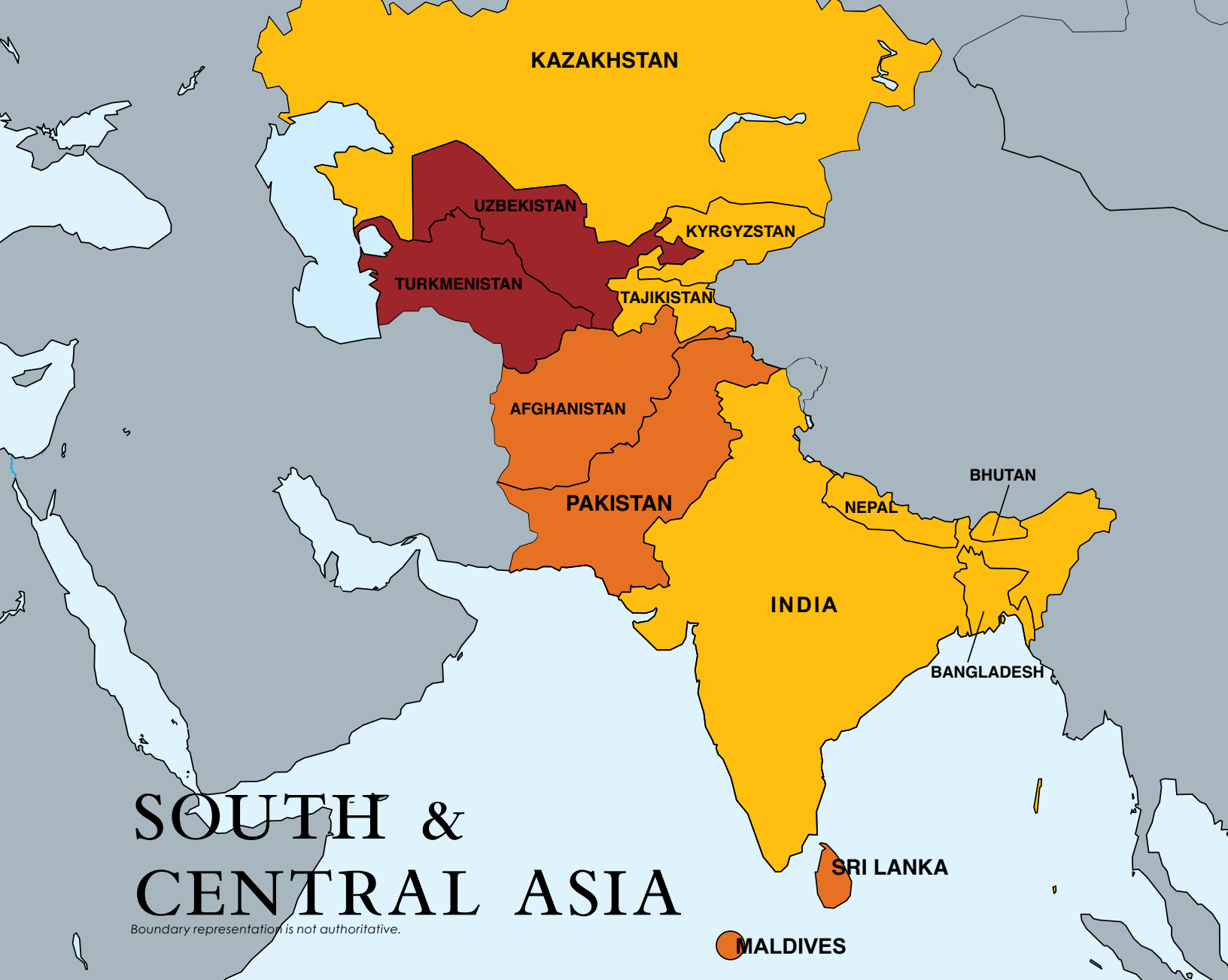


TIER PLACEMENTS

■ TIER 1
 ■ TIER 2
 ■ TIER 2 WATCH LIST
 ■ TIER 3
 ■ SPECIAL CASE

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	80 (9)	57 (8)	1,011	6
2010	323 (63)	68 (10)	1,304	1
2011	209 (17)	60 (5)	1,831 (1,132)	2
2012	249 (29)	149 (15)	4,047 (1,063)	1
2013	119 (25)	60 (4)	1,460 (172)	4
2014	320 (5)	144 (25)	3,388 (2,460)	0
2015	480 (31)	343 (31)	6,068 (156)	0

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources. Prosecution and victim identification data reported this year are higher than in previous years, in large part due to increased information sharing and better data quality from several governments.



TIER PLACEMENTS



YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	1,989 (56)	1,450 (10)	8,325	1
2010	1,460 (196)	1,068 (11)	4,357	1
2011	974 (24)	829 (11)	3,907 (1,089)	2
2012	1,043 (6)	874 (4)	4,415 (2,150)	1
2013	1,904 (259)	974 (58)	7,124 (1,290)	5
2014	1,839 (12)	958 (10)	4,878 (1,041)	3
2015	6,915 (225)	1,462 (16)	24,867 (1,191)	0

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources. Prosecution and victim identification data reported this year are higher than in previous years, in large part due to increased information sharing and better data quality from several governments.



WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Boundary representation is not authoritative.

TIER PLACEMENTS

- TIER 1
- TIER 2
- TIER 2 WATCH LIST
- TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2009	647 (47)	553 (66)	9,020	1
2010	732 (80)	293 (65)	6,681	6
2011	624 (17)	279 (14)	9,014 (2,490)	3
2012	1,077 (369)	402 (107)	7,639 (3,501)	8
2013	1,182 (207)	446 (50)	7,818 (3,951)	4
2014	944 (67)	470 (63)	8,414 (2,014)	5
2015	1,747 (83)	663 (26)	9,661 (2,118)	6

The above statistics are estimates only, given the lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified. The number of victims identified includes information from foreign governments and other sources.



A former child soldier walks home with his parents after being discharged from the Burmese army, free at last.

HOW TO READ A COUNTRY NARRATIVE

This page shows a sample country narrative. The Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention sections of each country narrative describe how a government has or has not addressed the relevant TVPA minimum standards (see page 46), during the reporting period. This truncated narrative gives a few examples.

The country's tier ranking is based on the government's efforts against trafficking as measured by the TVPA minimum standards, in the context of its efforts in the preceding year(s).

COUNTRY X: Tier 2 Watch List

Profile of human trafficking in recent years.

Country X is a transit and destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and, to a much lesser extent, forced prostitution. Men and women from South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Middle East voluntarily travel to Country X as laborers and domestic servants, but some subsequently face conditions indicative of involuntary servitude. These conditions include threats of serious harm, including threats of legal action and deportation; withholding of pay; restrictions on freedom of movement, including the confiscation of passports and travel documents and physical, mental, and sexual abuse. In some cases, arriving migrant workers have found that the terms of employment in Country X are wholly different from those they agreed to in their home countries. Individuals employed as domestic servants are particularly vulnerable to trafficking since they are not covered under the provisions of the law. Country X is also a destination for women who migrate for purposes of prostitution, but the extent to which they are subjected to forced prostitution is unknown.

TVPA Minimum Standard 4(10) – whether the government shows evidence of overall increasing efforts.

TVPA Minimum Standard 4(2) – whether the government adequately protects victims of trafficking by identifying them and ensuring they have access to necessary services.

Summary of the government's efforts to ensure that trafficking victims are identified and provided adequate protection.

Synopsis of government efforts.

The Government of Country X does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Although the government has not yet enacted necessary anti-trafficking legislation, during the reporting period it reaffirmed its commitment to this goal over the next year. Despite these efforts, the government did not show evidence of overall progress in prosecuting and punishing trafficking offenders and identifying victims of trafficking; therefore, Country X is placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

Guidance on how the government can enhance its efforts and obtain a better tier ranking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTRY X:
Enact the draft comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation; significantly increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses, and convict and punish trafficking offenders; institute and consistently apply formal procedures to identify and assist victims, including among vulnerable groups, such as those arrested for prostitution; and collect, disseminate, and enforce counter-trafficking law enforcement data.

TVPA Minimum Standards 1-3 – whether the government prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes adequate criminal punishments.

TVPA Minimum Standard 4(3) – whether the government is making adequate efforts to prevent human trafficking, including measures to ensure its diplomats or peacekeepers assigned abroad do not engage in trafficking.

Summary of the government's efforts to prevent human trafficking.

Summary of the country's laws and the government's law enforcement efforts against human trafficking.

PROSECUTION
The Government of Country X made minimal efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses during the reporting period. Country X does not prohibit all acts of trafficking, but it criminalizes slavery under Section 321 and forced labor under Section 322 of its criminal law. The prescribed penalty for forced labor—up to six months' imprisonment—is not sufficiently stringent. Article 297 prohibits forced or coerced prostitution, and the prostitution of a child below age 15 even if there was no compulsion or redress; the prescribed penalty is up to 15 years' imprisonment, which is commensurate with penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Draft revisions to the penal code have not yet been enacted. An unconfirmed report indicates that four traffickers were charged with fraudulently issuing visas to workers who they then exploited. Two were reportedly deported, and two were reportedly convicted. The government did not confirm nor deny the existence of this case. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking offenses.

PROTECTION

Country X made minimal progress in protecting victims of trafficking during the reporting period. Although health care facilities reportedly refer suspected abuse cases to the government anti-trafficking shelter for investigation, the government continues to lack a systematic procedure for law enforcement to identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable populations, such as foreign workers awaiting deportation and women arrested for prostitution; as a result, victims may be punished and automatically deported without being identified as victims or offered protection. The government reported that the Ministry of the Interior has a process by which it refers victims to the trafficking shelter; however, this process is underutilized in practice. The trafficking shelter assisted 24 individuals during the reporting period and provided them with a wide range of services, including full medical treatment and legal and job assistance. Country X commonly fines and detains potential trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, such as immigration violations and running away from their sponsors, without determining whether the individuals are victims of trafficking.

Country X sometimes offers temporary relief from deportation so that victims can testify as witnesses against their employers. However, victims were generally not permitted to leave the country if there is a pending case. The government did not routinely encourage victims to assist in trafficking investigations or consistently offer victims alternatives to removal to countries where they may face retribution or hardship.

PREVENTION

Country X made modest progress in preventing trafficking during the reporting period. While the government made some effort to amend provisions of Country X's sponsorship law to prevent the forced labor of migrant workers, the government failed to enforce other parts of the law to the benefit of migrant workers. One provision in the sponsorship law continues to require for workers to request exit permits from their sponsors in order to leave Country X. Although this may increase migrant workers' vulnerability to forced labor, the law created a new process through which a laborer who was not granted an exit permit due to a sponsor's refusal or other circumstances can seek one by other means. The Ministry of Labor sponsored media campaigns and organized informational workshops for officials, NGOs, and labor recruitment agencies. However, the government did not provide anti-trafficking training or guidance to its diplomatic personnel during the reporting period. The government has a national plan of action to address trafficking in persons, but did not publicly disseminate the plan or take steps to implement it during the reporting period. The government did not take any public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing the demand for commercial sex acts in Country X, but it government convicted two of its nationals for soliciting children for sex in other countries and sentenced them to 10 years' imprisonment.

TVPA Minimum Standard 4(7) – whether the government has made adequate efforts to address the involvement in or facilitation of human trafficking by government employees.

TVPA Minimum Standard 4(11) – whether the government has made efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, and, if applicable, participation in international sex tourism by its nationals.