TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT
JUNE 2023

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MESSAGE FROM **THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Dear Reader:

Human trafficking is an affront to our foundational values—that everyone is created equal and has the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It erodes our communities, weakens the rule of law, and undermines our national security. As President Biden wrote in the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, this Administration is committed to keeping that fight at the forefront of our national security agenda.

Every year millions of people are exploited within and across borders. They are forced to work in factories for little or no pay; harvest crops; toil in terrible conditions in mines, construction sites, and fishing boats; or work in private homes. Many victims are exploited for commercial sex, adults and children alike.

This year's Trafficking in Persons Report provides a comprehensive overview of the state of human trafficking around the world and the tools we are using to strengthen our response and coordination. It also highlights the stories of survivors, emerging tactics—like cyber scam operations—used by traffickers and provides recommendations for how we can better work together to address this crime. The report is the product of the hard work and dedication of countless individuals and organizations around the world, who are engaged in the fight against human trafficking sometimes at great personal risk.

The pages that follow are an immediate call to action. Tackling a global problem like trafficking requires a global coalition, one that cuts across government, business, and civil society. By sharing resources and information, we can better equip front-line stakeholders to track and respond to evolving trafficking trends. By partnering with survivors, we can better establish trauma-informed anti-trafficking policies and strategies. And by leveraging technology, we can better address the nexus between finance and human trafficking and better detect online exploitation.

I am proud of the progress we have made in the fight against human trafficking. There is more work to be done. We will continue to improve and adapt our efforts to combat this crime, and build stronger partnerships with governments, businesses, survivor leaders, and NGOs. We will ensure survivors of trafficking have access to the services they need to rebuild their lives. Together, we can make human trafficking a relic of the past.

Sincerely,

Antony Blinken

MESSAGE FROM **THE AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE**

Dear Reader:

Partnerships are the essential foundation for sustainable and successful anti-trafficking work. This year's introduction recognizes the powerful partnerships taking root across the world to address human trafficking. Every new vulnerability that emerges, whether related to conflict or climate change, online marketplaces or dating sites, is an opportunity for traffickers to exploit others. The hard reality of human trafficking is that criminals exploit many aspects of communication, finance, transportation, and commerce that have connected and enriched our global community. Traffickers constantly evolve their networks to take advantage of emerging technologies and migratory trends. Getting ahead of the traffickers requires us—governments, civil society, front-line workers, and the private sector—to harness advanced tools and to forge new relationships. Effective partnerships manifest the power to transform anti-trafficking efforts from prevention to protection to prosecution. This report highlights some of these successful collaborations and it honors anti-trafficking heroes around the world who have embodied the spirit of partnership in their respective countries.

I know firsthand the power of partnership. From my earliest days as a prosecutor in Dallas where I joined the county's first interagency anti-trafficking task force, to my position leading the human rights program of a nongovernmental organization cultivating a global network of women leaders, and to this role using diplomacy to forge international collaboration, I have witnessed how advancing partnerships to share in the immense task of fighting human trafficking increases the likelihood of success.

Partnerships better equip anti-trafficking stakeholders with the tools, information, and resources they need to tackle this complex crime and its interwoven components. Banks and other financial institutions should work together to dismantle the profit motive of traffickers by identifying and reporting money laundering, bribery, wage theft, and payments associated with human trafficking. Businesses should partner with NGOs to ensure forced labor is not part of their global supply chains, and consumers should demand businesses guarantee their products are not made with forced labor.

Governments should partner with one another, civil society, and technology companies to raise awareness, detect predatory behavior on online platforms, and appropriately identify and provide assistance to victims. Cyber scams—from fake dating profiles to illegal gambling operations—are increasingly perpetuated through forced criminality. Transnational organized criminal groups are exploiting the vulnerabilities laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic, from social isolation to increased presence online, to coerce workers from around the world to conduct those scams, while also defrauding untold more.

Human trafficking thrives in an unequal world. Human traffickers often prey on our most vulnerable communities, frequently targeting victims who are reluctant to call the police, lack access to services and programs, or feel excluded or ostracized. Our partnerships must be broad enough to reach and to include diverse groups and marginalized communities. Promoting equity with respect to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and for marginalized communities is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. When we partner to support vulnerable migrants, advocate for women's rights, or enact legislation to protect LGBTQI+ individuals, we are creating a more just and equitable world that is also more impervious to human traffickers.

Survivors are essential partners in the anti-trafficking movement. Survivors possess and bring an invaluable perspective that can improve programs, policies, and strategies to ensure all efforts are victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent responses to trafficking. Survivors significantly enhance our ability to target our collective anti-trafficking efforts.

Combating human trafficking, a crime with tangled root causes and complex webs of exploitation, requires us each to reach beyond ourselves and to call on others to help. I am honored to be your partner in this effort.

Sincerely,

Cindy Dyer

A Rohingya woman covers her face. Enduring military conflict in Burma has displaced thousands of Rohingya and members of other ethnic minority groups, many of whom are at increased risk of human trafficking as a result of vulnerabilities created by their displacement within Burma and beyond.

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THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

"Human trafficking is a challenge that transcends borders, so we must partner with allies across the globe to detect human trafficking, connect victims with supportive services, and strengthen accountability."

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

PARTNERSHIP: EFFECTIVELY PROSECUTING, PROTECTING, AND PREVENTING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Please note that this introduction contains substantial input from the Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network (the Network). The purpose of the Network is to engage experts, particularly those with lived experience of human trafficking, to provide expertise and input on Department of State anti-trafficking policies, strategies, and products. The introduction of the 2022 TIP Report highlighted the importance of engaging survivors as partners in establishing effective victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent anti-trafficking polices and strategies that address prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts. In light of this year's theme on partnership, we continue to prioritize partnering with survivors through this year's TIP Report. The programs and technological innovations mentioned are intended to be illustrative of promising practices and applications. It is not an exhaustive list as there are numerous examples of promising technological innovations to combat human trafficking, advance partnerships, and strengthen responsible supply chains. The Department of State does not endorse any organization or program mentioned.

Historical Background

Effective, multidisciplinary partnerships have long been essential to the success of the "3P" framework of prosecution, protection, and prevention in global anti-trafficking efforts. A comprehensive approach to human trafficking requires governments to prioritize multiple layers of cooperation, including internally between government agencies and externally with other governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, media, community leaders, NGOs, and survivors and survivor-led organizations. The 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) introduction examines and highlights how governments and a wide range of stakeholders have used partnerships to advance anti-trafficking priorities and goals. The introduction also shares innovative approaches and specific examples of partnerships that have complemented and supported the success of prosecution, protection, and prevention efforts.

The UN TIP Protocol and the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), recognize the importance of both the "3P" framework and strategic partnerships in global efforts to fight human trafficking. Over the years, multilateral organizations have been at the forefront of establishing and supporting a strong international framework for partnerships to address human trafficking. In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which included a section on partnerships and highlighted the

RAISING AWARENESS: A SPOTLIGHT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

While based on true stories, the examples and photographs included in this report are meant to be illustrative. They represent the many—though not all—forms of human trafficking and the wide variety of places in which they occur. Some of the stories included are composites based on multiple accounts or regional human trafficking trends. Names have been changed to protect the individuals involved. Not every human trafficking victim will receive trauma-informed support, often leading to further harm. In most cases, the photographs and captions that accompany the stories are not images of confirmed trafficking victims. Still, they illustrate the myriad schemes human traffickers use and the variety of situations in which they exploit victims.

Workers unload bricks from a brick kiln. More than 10,000 Cambodians live at such kilns, many of whom are subjected to multi-generational debt-based coercion.

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 this definition.

wide range and types of partnerships necessary to strengthen global anti-trafficking efforts. Alliance 8.7, a global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, convenes anti-trafficking stakeholders across various sectors to take measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor by 2030. Alliance 8.7 further demonstrates the breadth of organizations and individuals that should be included in effective partnerships such as governments, international and regional organizations, workers' and employers' organizations, the private sector, NGOs, survivors and survivor-led organizations, academic and research institutions, and public and private donors. In 2021, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Global Plan of Action and recognized that both it and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mutually reinforce the importance of partnerships.

Other multilateral frameworks bolstering partnerships include the Addendum to OSCE's Action Plan, which formally incorporates partnership as a fourth "P" and highlights the need for enhanced international cooperation, including among law enforcement entities, between origin and destination countries, and between public institutions and the private sector. While not every partnership needs to have global reach, the prioritization of partnership by multilateral organizations has been essential to the establishment and potential of international anti-trafficking efforts.

A boy uses a schoolbook while herding cattle. Traffickers often fraudulently recruit children under the pretext of educational opportunities and instead force them to labor as farm hands.

The Role of Partnerships in Supporting the "3P" Framework

Strategic, multi-disciplinary partnerships can enhance the work of governments, the private sector, NGOs, and survivors and survivor-led organizations to further investigations and prosecutions, support victim identification and protection efforts, and develop targeted prevention programs. Depending on the goal, partnerships can comprise a multitude of actors, such as in North Macedonia, where the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy maintained mobile teams composed of social workers, law enforcement officers, NGO staff, and psychologists across five regions to identify vulnerable populations, including unaccompanied children, children who were homeless, and trafficking victims. Since the start of these mobile teams, a record number of trafficking victims have been identified, and experts deemed this model a promising practice in proactive identification and cooperation among stakeholders with varying expertise, particularly between civil society and government. Partnerships can also better equip anti-trafficking stakeholders to respond to evolving human trafficking trends, such as refining and leveraging advancements in technology, collaborating to eliminate forced labor in supply chains, and sharing information and resources to better address the nexus between human trafficking and climate change.

> ***"We can't do this work effectively without having the voices, the views, the experiences, the ideas of survivors front and center in everything that we're doing."***
>
> **Antony Blinken,**
> Secretary of State

Interagency Coordination

Coordination and partnership within governments are essential to a comprehensive, national anti-trafficking response. Adopting a whole-of-government approach to anti-trafficking efforts, which can be organized by a coordinating body operating at the cabinet or ministerial level, enhances opportunities for government agencies to better partner with one another to implement and enforce national trafficking laws, provide protection and services to survivors, coordinate prevention activities, address information gaps, incorporate survivor-informed and trauma-informed approaches, and streamline or coordinate on overlapping efforts.

Strong multilevel and multi-sectoral coordination between the central government and sub-national or local-level governments is also critical. The ability to effectively coordinate across levels of government may depend on the size of a particular country, the government's level of centralization (usually due to whether a federal system of government is in place or not), and the availability of resources. In Argentina, the government's Federal Council for the Fight against Human Trafficking and Exploitation promotes intragovernmental coordination on anti-trafficking efforts. The Council's biannual meetings facilitate collaboration between provincial and federal anti-trafficking authorities and allow representatives of Argentina's 24 jurisdictions (23 provinces and one federal district) to review the activities of the federal government's Executive Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking and Exploitation of People and the Protection and Assistance of Victims.

Governments should consider conducting a mapping exercise to review and assess organizational charts of government agencies—at all levels—that may encounter victims or traffickers during their duties. Governments should map government and civil society-administered services and resources available to victims upon identification, and training should be made available to ensure that agencies at all levels are familiar with victim identification and the resources available. Authorities should be knowledgeable about care available to victims following a trafficking

situation, and these services should be readily accessible. In Chile, the government's Interagency Taskforce on Human Trafficking (MITP) is composed of 32 government and nine civil society entities with a role in anti-trafficking efforts. Its executive secretariat oversees the interagency protocol for the referral of trafficking victims and other dedicated anti-trafficking resources and liaises with a network of regional anti-trafficking taskforces across the country. Data on human trafficking should also be gathered nationwide and locally as a means to best target anti-trafficking efforts, and training should be made available vertically to ensure that state and local authorities are familiar with national programs that can strengthen their efforts. This knowledge can be used to determine opportunities for partnership to optimize government anti-trafficking responses, as well as identify and close gaps.

Partnerships with Survivors

Collaborating with survivors as experts and equal partners is critical to understanding the realities of human trafficking and establishing effective victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent anti-trafficking polices and strategies. Survivor leaders can contribute to and enhance efforts across all aspects of anti-trafficking responses, including the development of programs and policies to improve protection for victims, identifying and implementing effective frameworks to support prevention efforts, shaping policies and pathways for establishing and supporting survivors' long-term financial stability and independence, and advising on trauma-informed courtroom practices. Recognizing that survivors are equal stakeholders in anti-trafficking work is required for effective partnerships with survivors.

Meaningful partnerships with survivors must include a diverse range of survivor voices that consists of traditionally underserved populations and a variety of trafficking experiences to provide input on anti-trafficking efforts. It is also crucial to recognize that survivors' lived experiences can provide skills and knowledge as valuable to global anti-trafficking efforts and partnerships as those gained from traditional work experience. To that end, partnerships should be designed to thoughtfully incorporate survivors' input and create safe spaces that address or balance power dynamics to permit the sharing of unique perspectives. Partnerships should also acknowledge and promote survivors as professionals in the field through fostering opportunities for them to grow with the organization and initiative. Prioritizing opportunities for survivor leadership is essential to fighting human trafficking and should be a priority in establishing and engaging in partnerships.

"Meaningful engagement is not asking survivors to share their stories. It is collaborating with survivors in all aspects of anti-trafficking efforts such as developing practices, policies, and strategies. It is prioritizing survivor leadership."

Rafael Bautista,
Member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

Governments around the world have increasingly prioritized survivor engagement, such as through establishing consultant mechanisms or advisory councils. Since 2019, Tunisia's National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons has consulted a network of survivors that serve as a council to share experiences, advice, and recommendations to improve the work of the National Authority. More recently, in 2022, Israel established a national anti-trafficking advisory committee, which includes two survivors advising on a range of topics, including forced labor in supply chains, foreign labor recruitment by foreign construction companies, preventing forced labor and labor violations in an agriculture internship program for foreign students, permits for Palestinian workers in Israel, and visa waiver programs. Likewise, countries including Bangladesh, Botswana, Finland, Iceland, North Macedonia, and Uganda engaged survivors in national anti-trafficking planning efforts within the past two years. Countries including Australia, Canada, and the United States committed to survivor engagement through their national action plans. Many governments and multilateral organizations are advocating to include a call for developing survivor-informed policy to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts in multilateral resolutions. For example, delegates at the ILO's 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour adopted the 2022 Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour, which commits to strengthen "the protection of survivors through data-driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses" along with the "prevention and elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, forced labor, modern slavery and trafficking in persons."

A young man sits outside his home. Research has shown that men and boys are less likely to self-identify as victims of human trafficking due to the significant risk of stigma, while the lack of resources for male victims remains a significant barrier.

Despite these developments, the meaningful inclusion of survivors as anti-trafficking experts must be further integrated across global anti-trafficking efforts and accepted as a norm. Partnership between governments, multilateral organizations, and survivors of human trafficking not only improves anti-trafficking efforts, but also dismantles the risk of misconceptions, shame, re-traumatization, and re-exploitation of survivors within their communities; these risks can also be perpetuated by organizations proliferating sensationalist or inaccurate stories. Addressing these barriers—as well as engaging in co-creation processes with survivors—empowers survivors, promotes equity within organizations, and reduces vulnerability to re-victimization.

Partnerships with Civil Society and Other External Stakeholders

Creating a plan that is clear, resourced, realistic, and informed by a group of relevant and diverse stakeholders is key to proactively addressing trafficking and out-maneuvering complex and well-organized trafficking operations. Government partnerships with domestic and international NGOs, including survivor-led organizations, are critical to both a comprehensive response to trafficking cases and supporting national action plans as well as resulting programs and policies. NGOs are often funded by governments to provide protection services to victims and contribute to the preparation and implementation of national guidelines for victim identification and referrals to law enforcement. In Niger, the Government's National Agency for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons and the Illicit Transport of Migrants works closely with IOM on victim referral and protection efforts, including by collaborating to implement and train frontline officials on the national

TANZANIA—KENYA

Neema was 8 years old when a man approached her grandmother and offered Neema a job in Kenya. The man promised to send money back to Tanzania to help support Neema's grandmother and siblings. Struggling to support her family, Neema's grandmother accepted the man's offer. When Neema arrived in Kenya, the man forced her to beg on the streets of Nairobi alongside other children. She worked long hours but was not paid or able to send money home. Neema escaped from her trafficker with the help of a woman who offered Neema a job cleaning her home. However, the woman re-exploited Neema and forced her into domestic servitude for six years. Neema eventually ran away and reported her situation to the Nairobi police. She has now returned to Tanzania and is receiving support from a shelter for child trafficking victims.

"As a human trafficking lived experience expert, I am elated at the possibilities intentional and consistent collaboration can produce. Having the opportunity to work at the federal and state levels has led to long-lasting partnerships that reverberate our common goals."

Tanya Gould,
Director of the Virginia Attorney General's Anti-Trafficking Task Force

referral mechanism. Additionally, the Government of Niger partners with IOM on the provision of medical, psycho-social, and legal assistance in its government shelter for trafficking victims. NGOs, especially those that are survivor-led, serve as a bridge between victims and government agencies and are well equipped to provide feedback on government anti-trafficking policy based on their expertise in the protection realm. Involving NGOs and survivors in the development of government anti-trafficking programming and policies can improve the effectiveness of these efforts by ensuring they reflect the realities of human trafficking and integrate trauma-informed, survivor-informed, and victim-centered approaches.

Government partnerships with NGOs and survivors promote improved anti-trafficking plans and better outcomes; however, NGOs and survivors should not be expected to carry the financial burden of a government's anti-trafficking responses. It is essential for governments to provide adequate resourcing and financial support, especially when external partners have limited sources of funding. When governments share resources, information, and decision-making ability with organizations working towards a common goal, these partnerships will begin to build a more trusted and collaborative anti-trafficking response.

Partnerships to Further Investigations

Effective partnerships for furthering investigations can be established between actors equipped with data-collection capabilities, intelligence sharing skills, and insights from individuals with lived experience of human trafficking, such as NGOs, CSOs, intelligence or investigative agencies, and survivor-led organizations. These types of partnerships allow investigators and prosecutors to build a successful court case against the trafficker without solely relying on the victim's testimony or involvement, a practice that often results in further harm and re-traumatization. Emerging and promising features of such partnerships include an increased focus on investigating the trafficker and evidence that is available regardless of the victim's participation, collaboration with related financial crimes investigations to uncover and dismantle trafficking operations, and cross-sector data sharing. Whether victims are required to testify or have a more limited role in the court case, support for their long-term well-being should be at the forefront of considerations, proactively ensuring connections are made between the victim and community stakeholders that will be available after the case is closed. These partnership strategies can often make way for more efficient use of resources, higher conviction rates, reduced harm to victims, and more meaningful engagement with survivors.

CAMBODIA—PHILIPPINES

Sonith left his home in the Philippines for what he believed was legal work in mainland Southeast Asia. Once in Thailand, traffickers from the People's Republic of China took him to a remote compound and forced him, alongside many other Filipino individuals, to leverage their English language skills to run online cryptocurrency scams including illegal online gambling and investment schemes targeting American citizens and Canadians. Traffickers confined Sonith to the compound and made him work up to 16 hours a day, seven days a week, with little access to food. After a year, Sonith escaped and returned to the Philippines but feared he would be prosecuted for what happened to him. This fear has prevented him from seeking help and support services.

Another form of partnership to better understand and prevent human trafficking is through financial investigations. Human trafficking is a financially motivated crime at its core. Banks and other financial institutions are best positioned to identify and report crimes that frequently occur in tandem with human trafficking, such as wage theft, money laundering, and bribery. Other financial activities that support trafficking operations include payments associated with the transport of victims and other logistics (e.g., hotels or plane tickets) and the collection or movement of proceeds generated by the exploitation of trafficking victims and by the sale of goods produced through their exploitation. Survivors can be caught in the crosshairs of financial crime identification as traffickers conduct illicit transactions using their victims' identities and bank accounts. In recent years, coordination and information-sharing between law enforcement, survivors, and financial institutions has led to a better understanding of the strategies traffickers employ to control victims, make transactions, and keep their illicit activities hidden. Polaris, a U.S.-based NGO, partnered with PayPal to create its Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which combines the anti-money laundering, banking, and law enforcement communities with the expertise of human trafficking survivors and others in the anti-trafficking field to interrupt trafficker cash flows and enable prosecutions for financial crimes. Through regular meetings attended by representatives of financial institutions, Polaris's FIU analyzes case studies, industry trends, and potential solutions to inform stakeholders' anti-money laundering investigative practices as it relates to human trafficking. Financial institutions and anti-money laundering experts are increasingly well-equipped to identify and intervene where financial activities and crimes facilitate human trafficking operations; this strengthens law enforcement investigations and the availability of evidence that can be used instead of or as a supplement to victim testimony.

A woman catches fish in a coastal region of South Asia. Areas such as these are at heightened risk of natural disasters, droughts, floods, and extreme weather due to climate change, placing residents at increased risk of trafficking.

In Indonesia, a man separates mercury from gold nuggets. In Southeast Asia, the remote nature of some gold mines leaves workers isolated and vulnerable to traffickers.

Partnerships to Address Cross-Border Trafficking

As human trafficking often occurs transnationally, international partnership is key to effectively identifying victims and prosecuting the perpetrators. Whether it be detecting victims during border crossings, identifying overseas workers exploited in forced labor, or repatriating victims caught without identification, cooperation between source, transit, and destination countries' governments and law enforcement, as well as with NGOs, international organizations, and the private sector, is key to preventing, identifying, and prosecuting transnational human trafficking cases. Identifying and ensuring protection services, policies, and laws that protect foreign national victims from being removed from countries, and instead helping them integrate, also often requires coordination amongst a variety of stakeholders.

Government agencies should join forces with local NGOs and survivor-led organizations with expertise in addressing victims' overall needs and well-being in a safe, timely, and trauma-informed manner, and in helping victims by providing comprehensive services such as establishing residence in a new country when needed or supporting victims' repatriation. In the case of Nigeria, the government often coordinates with foreign governments and international NGOs to mitigate their citizens' risks of becoming trafficking victims, and to support citizens subjected to trafficking abroad. In January 2023, the Center for Human Trafficking Research and Outreach at the University of Georgia, working with Free the Slaves, coordinated with authorities in Senegal and Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to secure the approval for the travel and safe return of 19 Nigerian women and children who were identified as victims of sex trafficking in Senegal's gold mining region.

> ***"Despite our great strides in recent years, human trafficking remains a horrific reality for countless millions of people around the world. Today, as millions of Ukrainian women and children fleeing Putin's brutal invasion are among those at the greatest risk of being trafficked, we are reminded that traffickers seize any opportunity to exploit people in desperate circumstances, particularly victims of war and conflict."***
>
> **U.S. Senator Bob Menendez, (D-NJ),**
> Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

As demonstrated in Nigeria, understanding human trafficking trends and gaps can help identify opportunities for partnership. In late November 2022, ECPAT Luxembourg organized a consultative meeting in Kathmandu with government stakeholders focused on cross-border trafficking between India and Nepal. NGO partners from those countries presented updates and highlighted challenges faced in both countries in identifying and supporting survivors returning to Nepal. Following the meeting, the NGOs co-developed a list of recommendations for the Government of Nepal and highlighted opportunities for government stakeholders to improve protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations by increasing anti-trafficking coordination. In October 2022, Jordan approved SOPs for implementation of its NRM to assist victims requesting repatriation after identification and encourage coordination with home country governments. Jordan's NRM defines the roles of government, international organizations, and NGOs in various stages of the process to ensure coordination. The Russian government's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine creates significant vulnerabilities to trafficking for the millions of refugees who have fled Ukraine and for the internally displaced persons and others in need of humanitarian aid and protection assistance within Ukraine. The OSCE and Thomson Reuters collaborated to create the BeSafe campaign to help Ukrainians spot the warning signs of human trafficking, minimize their personal risk, and get assistance. More than 15,000 Ukrainians accessed BeSafe resources and hundreds of thousands more helped to raise awareness by sharing campaign information on social media. Private sector partners, including Vodaphone and Uber, continue to amplify the campaign. Partnerships between foreign governments and international NGOs help address gaps and emerging forms of trafficking that are difficult to prevent, detect, and prosecute, such as online-facilitated trafficking in which there are insufficient avenues for prosecution and providing services to victims.

A worker takes a break from packing grain at a factory. Forced labor in supply chains is a pervasive and pernicious element of the global marketplace, affecting individuals, businesses, and governments across a variety of industries and regions of the world.

BOLIVIA—CHILE

After fleeing Venezuela due to political instability in 2022, Renato, his wife, and young daughter were working as vendors on the streets of Santa Cruz, Bolivia. One day, Renato left his family for a few hours and returned to find them gone. After a week of frantically searching, members of a transnational criminal organization contacted Renato claiming to have kidnapped his family. The traffickers threatened to harm his family if Renato did not transport narcotics across the border between Bolivia and Chile. Chilean authorities arrested Renato while he attempted to cross the border. He remains in police custody despite being a victim of forced criminality. Officials have not found his wife and daughter.

"Governments need to re-double their efforts to proactively identify all victims, protect them, support survivors, prevent trafficking even in the face of new and complex challenges, and ensure that law enforcement holds traffickers accountable."

Cindy Dyer,
U.S. Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Partnerships to Advance Technology and Innovation for Anti-Trafficking Purposes

Partnerships focused on discovering and applying technological innovations to combat human trafficking are increasingly evolving among a range of multidisciplinary stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, private sector businesses, technology professionals, and those with lived experiences of human trafficking.

The Tech Against Trafficking (TAT) initiative was formed in early 2018 as a coalition of technology companies collaborating with nonprofit organizations, academics, international organizations, and other stakeholders to advance knowledge-sharing and accelerate the impact of technological solutions to combat human trafficking. TAT and the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings partnered to conduct a landscape analysis of technology tools used to combat human trafficking, producing the compendium *"Leveraging innovation to fight trafficking in human beings: A comprehensive analysis of technology tools."*

COLOMBIA—FRANCE

Ariela grew up in Colombia, where she suffered abuse and ostracization because of her identity as a transgender woman. She left home when a friend approached her with an offer to engage in commercial sex in France. The man claimed she would earn enough money to support herself and her family, as well as receive the gender-affirming care that she sought for her transition. Once Ariela arrived in France, the trafficker denied her the surgery, reduced the money she was promised by half, and forced her to take drugs and alcohol. Ariela was never allowed to reject any specific request, at any hour of the day or night. Eventually, Ariela contacted the police, who helped her leave the exploitative situation, and referred her to local organizations that provided trauma-informed and gender-affirming services and helped her return to Colombia. Ariela continues to receive support, including gender-affirming care and funding to start her own business, from a local NGO in Colombia.

This research uncovered 305 technology initiatives and outlined the types of anti-trafficking tools, geographical coverage, primary users, ethical considerations, data protections, gaps, and recommendations. The recommendations include general ones for all stakeholders involved in the use of technology to combat human trafficking, and more targeted ones for governments to bolster and guide their use of technology to combat the crime.

TAT also launched an Accelerator Program in 2019 to identify promising uses of technology in the anti-trafficking field and harness the expertise and resources of member companies to advance and scale the work of the organizations deploying such technologies. Through the program, technology companies provide mentorship, education, and greater network access as NGOs develop prototypes, pilot initiatives in specific communities or geographic locations, and/or replicate successful models. For example, Microsoft, British Telecommunications, Salesforce, and Amazon had been assisting IOM to advance privacy-preserving mechanisms, clarify data standards, and increase usage of IOM's global human trafficking data hub—the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC). The goal is to reduce barriers to sharing information publicly and highlight trafficking trends based on up-to-date, reliable, and standardized data on human trafficking. One component is to better utilize and protect victim data. Microsoft Research and IOM developed and refined an algorithm to generate synthetic data from the CTDC's sensitive victim case records. The resulting synthetic data accurately preserves the statistical properties of the original victim data without identifying actual victims.

Another technology-centered partnership advances connections among anti-trafficking organizations and companies through an online search platform. The Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking, the RESPECT Initiative (consisting of IOM, Babson College Initiative on Human Trafficking, and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime), and the UN Global Compact through the Action Platform on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, with support from Alliance 8.7., built an interactive map for businesses that provides information on relevant anti-trafficking organizations who work with the private sector to combat human trafficking. Companies and other stakeholders can search for NGOs, foundations, and initiatives using filters that include type of human trafficking, geography, industry, and services provided.

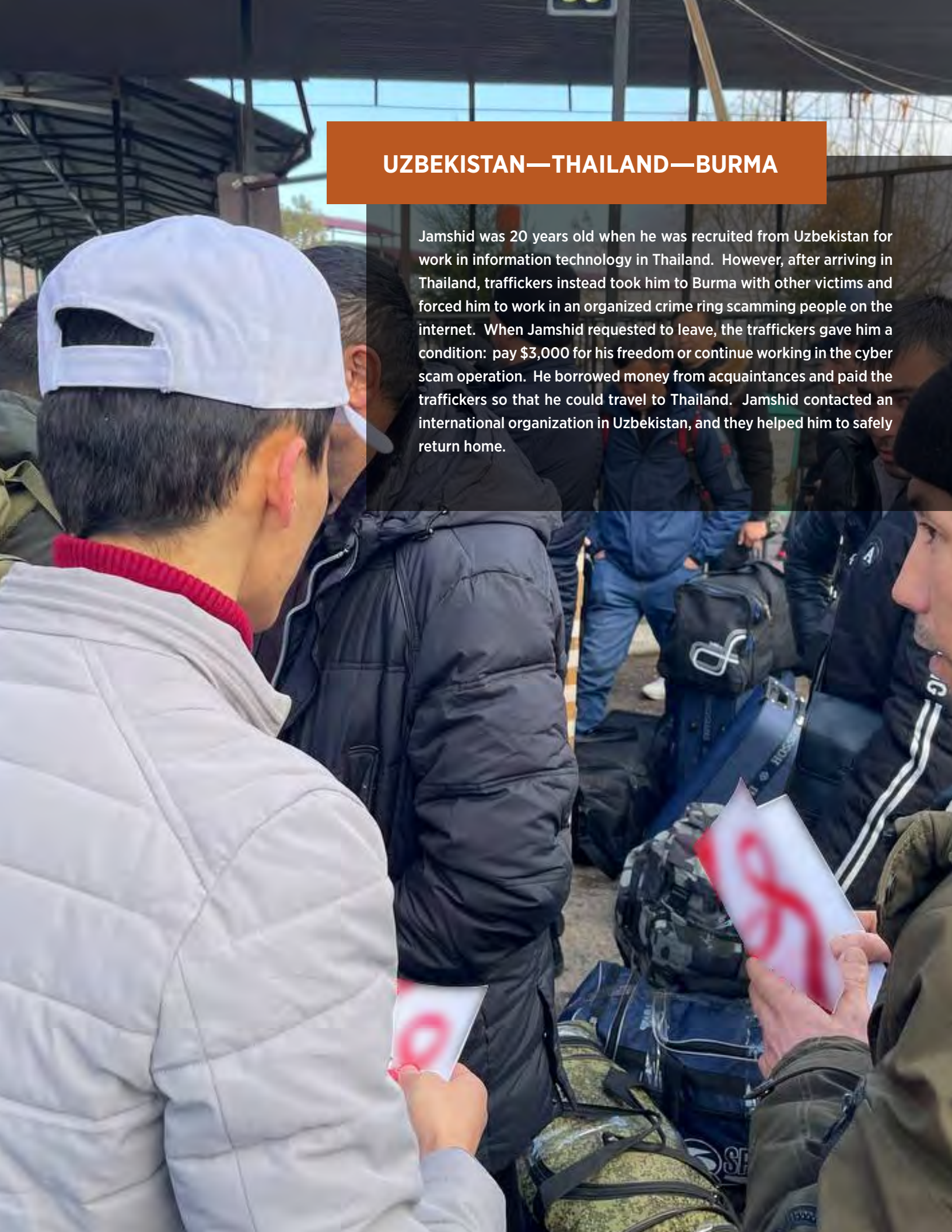
Finally, partnerships have formed to develop technology tools for law enforcement to support investigations and prosecutions and to protect communities, including through the use of big data analytics and cognitive machine learning to collate and analyze vast amounts of qualitative and quantitative data. In the United Kingdom, Trilateral Research use their Honeycomb app to present patterns, trends, and actionable insights and tools for policymakers and decision makers. More specifically, this app was designed to help stakeholders in public and private sectors take a more robust approach to combating human trafficking in the region. When authorities detect a spike in chatter about a certain venue, they can investigate further. When they detect the need for transportation or legal services for survivors, they can more swiftly address the gaps.

Partnerships for Monitoring and Eliminating Forced Labor in Supply Chains and Enhancing Worker Protections

Governments can learn from and replicate innovative tech applications and partnerships among the private sector and civil society to improve their own efforts to advance responsible supply chains by strengthening supply chain management with risk mapping and due diligence tools; bolstering worker engagement through the provision of rights-based information and training; and driving worker empowerment through technologies designed to bolster responsible recruitment and grievance mechanisms. Procurement of goods and services by governments, international organizations, and multinational companies is extensive, often with thousands of suppliers and hundreds of thousands of workers around the globe, so partnerships and innovative tech applications are essential to enhancing responsible supply chains and advancing worker protections. Strategic collaboration among governments, global brands and retailers, suppliers, recruitment agencies, workers, and those with lived experiences of human trafficking can maximize impact and make major contributions to preventing forced labor, as well as creating and promoting trauma-informed environments and care in the workplace.

The social enterprise Quizrr, which has operations throughout Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, North America, Mexico, and the European Union, is partnering with businesses and other organizations to educate factory owners and empower workers worldwide through training and knowledge-building about their rights. Partners include the IOM, the Ethical Trading Initiative, Ulula, Fair Fish, and BetterWork Bangladesh, among others. As of April 2023, more than 460,000 employees in 800 factories received training covering areas such as supplier standards, responsible recruitment practices, safe and respectful workplaces, effective workplace dialogue, and grievance channels. This training is now offered in 27 languages.

The Issara Institute, an NGO based in the United States and Asia, is advancing responsible supply chains through worker empowerment programs, long-term partnerships, and innovation. With major business and government partners as well as local grassroots partners in Burma, Cambodia, Nepal, Malaysia, and Thailand, the Issara Institute educates job seekers on safe ways to find jobs and build the capacity of "community-based Mobilizers" to spread knowledge and empowerment. The Inclusive Labor Monitoring (ILM) system and Golden Dreams smartphone app helps connect employers and factories with job seekers, improve the flow of information, educate workers about their rights and options, and verify and validate recruitment conditions. The goal is no fees, no middlemen, and no language barriers. The Issara Institute, with the support of major corporate foundations, also launched an updated worker-driven ethical recruitment toolkit in October 2022 to help government and civil society organizations better understand responsible recruitment and advance global brands' and retailers' efforts to drive more effective and inclusive approaches to responsible recruitment.



UZBEKISTAN—THAILAND—BURMA

Jamshid was 20 years old when he was recruited from Uzbekistan for work in information technology in Thailand. However, after arriving in Thailand, traffickers instead took him to Burma with other victims and forced him to work in an organized crime ring scamming people on the internet. When Jamshid requested to leave, the traffickers gave him a condition: pay $3,000 for his freedom or continue working in the cyber scam operation. He borrowed money from acquaintances and paid the traffickers so that he could travel to Thailand. Jamshid contacted an international organization in Uzbekistan, and they helped him to safely return home.

> ***"Male survivors of human trafficking have historically been silent due to the shame imbued by society's definition of masculinity. The time has come to break free of that stereotype and acknowledge that our pain matters, we define our lives, and we are men and victims too."***
>
> **Jerome Elam,**
> Child Sex Trafficking Survivor and CEO of Trafficking in America Task Force

The U.S.-based NGO Winrock International and other private sector companies are partnering to enhance safety along irregular migration corridors, which have elevated trafficking in persons risks, with funding from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office through the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. This collaboration resulted in SafeStep, a digital tool to empower individuals relocating overseas for work with the necessary knowledge and resources to ensure their recruitment and employment is conducted in safe and transparent ways.

Lessons Learned: Mitigating Harm when Establishing and Working in Partnerships

As the anti-trafficking field continues to advance, an increasing number of stakeholders seek to collaborate with each other in recognition of the value that building multi-sectoral information sharing and support systems, both domestically and internationally, brings to the "3P" paradigm. Over time, a field of promising practices emerged from these partnerships, building upon lessons learned and aiming to mitigate harm when establishing inter-organizational relationships among anti-trafficking professionals. Multistakeholder collaboration holds its own challenges surrounding power, status, financial resources, conflicting values and priorities, and considerations related to gender, racial, ethnic, and other differentials. However, the more pressing challenges tend to focus on the victim's immediate needs rather than also considering how to address the aforementioned factors to support the individual's long-term needs as a survivor. Throughout the history of the anti-trafficking movement, there was a clear lack of both short- and long-term meaningful partnerships with survivors. Quite simply, failing to incorporate survivors as key partners or mitigate further harm to recent victims and survivors when engaging them as partners is counterproductive to anti-trafficking efforts.

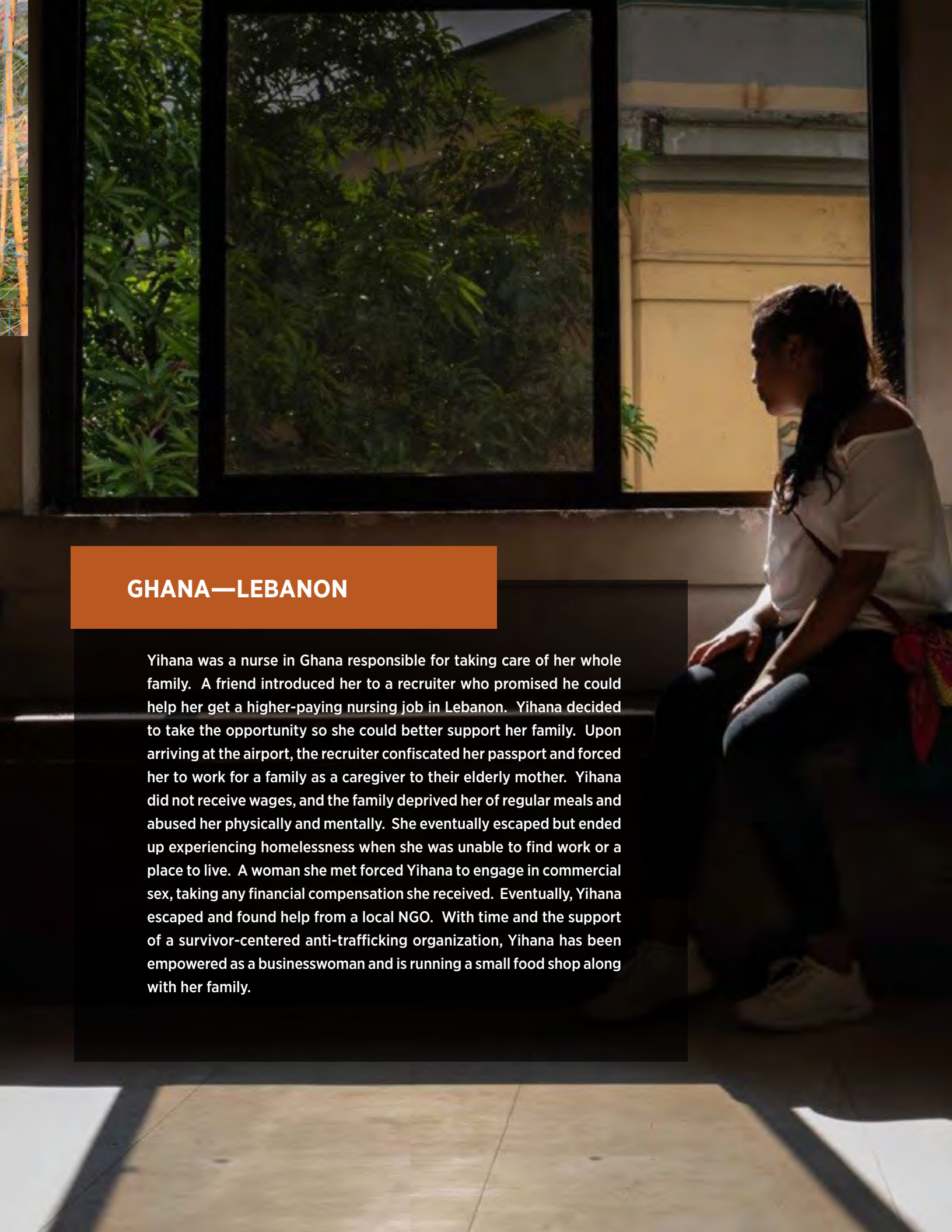
UKRAINE—UNITED KINGDOM

After a Russian airstrike killed her parents in Ukraine, 14-year-old Daria fled to the United Kingdom to seek asylum. While awaiting processing at a temporary shelter for unaccompanied minors, a young British man approached Daria and offered her a job as a waitress. The man claimed that having a job would expedite the asylum process and promised to provide Daria with English lessons and a safe place to live. Trusting his promises, Daria left the shelter and traveled with the man to a nearby city, where he quickly became abusive, locking her in a hotel room and making her take drugs. This man then exploited Daria in sex trafficking. He threatened her with deportation if she went to the police for help. Eventually, the police found Daria and referred her to temporary shelter where she could await processing for her asylum claim.

A migrant farm worker picks crops. Low-wage and migrant workers face riskier employment conditions, including restricted movement, withheld wages, and increasing debts—all indicators of human trafficking.

When establishing or working in partnerships between governments, law enforcement, NGOs, civil society, and survivor leaders, the following insights and lessons learned can mitigate further harm to victims and survivors of human trafficking:

- Avoid promoting stereotypes of survivors of human trafficking as damaged, weak, or powerless. Doing so is counterproductive to empowering survivors and supporting effective anti-trafficking efforts and even contributes to public confusion and misunderstanding of human trafficking within the anti-trafficking movement. Organizations should strive for meaningful engagements with survivors to inform anti-trafficking efforts and provide competitive compensation for survivors' expertise and contributions.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand human trafficking as a crime, its systemic and root causes, and survivor-informed and trauma-informed approaches to combating it. When providing training opportunities on these topics, organizations should prioritize partnering with survivors. If this is not an available option, organizations should first vet the training and trainers.
- Foster a culture of empathy within anti-trafficking organizations through the application of trauma-informed principles. This will benefit survivors as well as staff who have not experienced human trafficking but still interact with this challenging subject matter.
- Provide immigration relief and work authorization for survivors of human trafficking in a timely and trauma-informed manner to prevent prolonged suffering and the risk of re-victimization.
- Avoid inappropriately penalizing victims of both sex and labor trafficking, including children, for crimes they committed as a direct result of being trafficked.
- Utilize a variety of strategies when investigating human trafficking cases rather than relying solely on victim cooperation and testimony, including strategies from other crimes where victims are not able to provide testimony. Law enforcement and prosecutors should coordinate to more effectively confront the complexities of human trafficking cases, including the challenges to securing victims' and survivors' participation in the investigative process. Victims' and survivors' access to exit and recovery services should not be dependent on their compliance in investigations which also may put them at risk of stigmatizing themselves as well as causing further harm to the well-being and safety of the survivor and their family.



GHANA—LEBANON

Yihana was a nurse in Ghana responsible for taking care of her whole family. A friend introduced her to a recruiter who promised he could help her get a higher-paying nursing job in Lebanon. Yihana decided to take the opportunity so she could better support her family. Upon arriving at the airport, the recruiter confiscated her passport and forced her to work for a family as a caregiver to their elderly mother. Yihana did not receive wages, and the family deprived her of regular meals and abused her physically and mentally. She eventually escaped but ended up experiencing homelessness when she was unable to find work or a place to live. A woman she met forced Yihana to engage in commercial sex, taking any financial compensation she received. Eventually, Yihana escaped and found help from a local NGO. With time and the support of a survivor-centered anti-trafficking organization, Yihana has been empowered as a businesswoman and is running a small food shop along with her family.

"We must make it a top priority to educate our children to keep them safe online... We need to leave no stone unturned in protecting kids from online exploitation."

U.S. Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ),
Member of House Foreign Affairs Committee and Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Taking Action: Considerations for Anti-Trafficking Stakeholders to Support and Promote Partnerships

Human trafficking is a multi-dimensional crime requiring multidisciplinary approaches. No single anti-trafficking actor can eradicate human trafficking on its own. All stakeholders should commit to partnerships, though governments at all levels have a unique responsibility to initiate collaboration across sectors and foster an environment where partnerships can thrive. This whole-of-government approach requires incorporating the expertise of anti-trafficking stakeholders from a variety of organizations. Whether by partnering with individuals who were victims of human trafficking or coordinating with the private sector to understand and dismantle trafficking operations, governments are responsible for facilitating and ensuring a cohesive and well-resourced anti-trafficking response as well as creating a safe environment where civil society can operate freely and independently around the world and partner effectively to support victims.

We encourage governments, as well as all anti-trafficking stakeholders, to continue to support, pursue, and advocate for approaches to partnership that:

- Take steps to ensure close coordination in international partnerships to effectively address cases of human trafficking that involve foreign nationals. Acknowledge that human trafficking crimes happen both within and across borders, and that an effective anti-trafficking response calls for coordination. For example, partnerships with foreign governments can support legal immigration pathways for victims or facilitate their safe return and reintegration, increase protection and assistance for survivors of human trafficking and their immediate family members, facilitate the identification of traffickers and hold them accountable, and improve efforts to prevent cross-border human trafficking cases.
- Incorporate multidisciplinary partners, especially individuals who experienced human trafficking, in the design and implementation of victim assistance strategies, including effective NRMs, national action plans, and related grantmaking efforts.
- Encourage ongoing coordination between law enforcement, NGOs, and the private sector, especially with the financial sector, to investigate and combat illicit financial activity related to human trafficking and co-occurring crimes such as money laundering.

Despite great strides in the anti-trafficking field to regularly establish and work in partnerships on local and global levels, there are still considerable gaps and challenges in anti-trafficking responses that would benefit from establishing or enhancing partnerships.

Governments and anti-trafficking stakeholders should continuously seek to improve existing partnerships or identify new opportunities for partnerships, while also considering the following:

- Prioritize partnerships with survivors as subject matter experts in all anti-trafficking aspects, including to enhance trauma-informed services for victims, prevention and training efforts, and anti-trafficking policy at all levels of government. Meaningful partnerships with survivors also include employing survivors while providing adequate and individualized support. Additionally, clear data on the outcomes of these engagements may provide insight on how they can be improved and scaled.
- Meaningfully include all relevant stakeholders when developing and implementing a plan to monitor and respond to emerging issues and crises such as natural disasters, conflict, climate-related vulnerabilities, and the rise and evolution of online-facilitated human trafficking.
- Address the transnational aspects of corruption that fuel and encourage trafficking by strengthening the existing international anti-corruption architecture and addressing corruption as a global problem through public-private partnerships with civil society, including financial institutions, the private sector, multilateral organizations, and NGOs.
- Strengthen coordination between governments and relevant stakeholders to detect, trace, and report forced labor in supply chains by establishing and adapting policies to guard against it, as well as fostering a culture of consumer awareness domestically and globally.
- Establish an open feedback loop among all partners when focused on information, data, and intelligence sharing. Ensure governments, NGOs, and the private sector can provide feedback on the quality or impact of shared information. Comprehensive feedback loops will enable those gathering intelligence to improve and alter their approaches accordingly as well as fill information gaps related to vulnerable and marginalized populations and current victims.
- Enhance data to get ahead of traffickers and prevent the potential or further victimization of individuals that traffickers target.

Partner to Protect: Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Addressing Impacts of Climate Change on Human Trafficking

Climate change is a threat multiplier that creates unfavorable conditions that can exacerbate vulnerabilities to human trafficking, especially among marginalized populations. Environmental changes can amplify existing stressors, such as economic hardships, gender or identity-based discrimination, weak national frameworks of protection, and underlying conflict and insecurity, creating greater risks for human trafficking as individuals migrate as a result of these environmental changes.

Despite the intersectoral nature of the issue, anti-trafficking and environmental movements often operate in silos, hindering efficient and sustainable efforts. To create sustainable, transformational change, a multisectoral approach to address climate change—drawing on expertise from a variety of disciplines—is necessary to develop responses that mitigate risks and unintended consequences leading to exploitation. Partnerships are essential to developing solutions that account for the risk factors, socio-cultural behaviors, and adaptive strategies associated with both climate change and human trafficking to protect the world's most vulnerable from further exploitation.

Cross-cutting partnerships are emerging as a crucial aspect of uniting environmental and anti-trafficking efforts, including the following recent efforts:

- The Rights Lab, assisted by Delta 8.7 and the World Wildlife Fund, hosted a roundtable event to harness the knowledge of anti-trafficking experts and environmental actors and develop a roadmap for using a multi-stakeholder approach to address the nexus between human trafficking, environmental degradation, and climate change.

- The International Institute for Environment and Development, in partnership with Anti-Slavery International and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, are partnering to examine the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on deepening inequality, driving migration, and creating vulnerability to human trafficking, including forced labor, within and across borders. This will bring development actors, climate change specialists, and anti-trafficking experts together to develop joint recommendations for policymakers.

- In Bangladesh, Winrock International is partnering with the Government of Bangladesh and the University of Pennsylvania's Development Research Initiative to integrate anti-trafficking policies into the government's existing policies, plans, and responses to address vulnerabilities due to climate change while building the resilience and adaptation of communities.

- In East Africa, IOM is partnering with leading environmental experts to address human trafficking that exists due to vulnerabilities and displacement exacerbated by climate change in Kenya.

The impacts of climate-change-induced vulnerability to human trafficking cannot be addressed by one party alone. Proactive solutions to create systemic change require participation from governments, civil society, and the private sector and expertise from environmental and anti-trafficking specialists, and communities affected by this issue. With continued partnership and commitment from diverse voices, climate adaptations and anti-trafficking initiatives will emerge stronger.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

"Trafficking in persons" and "human trafficking" are umbrella terms—often used interchangeably — to refer to a crime whereby traffickers exploit and profit at the expense of adults or children by compelling them to perform labor or engage in commercial sex. When a person younger than 18 is used to perform a commercial sex act, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion involved.

The United States recognizes two primary forms of trafficking in persons: forced labor and sex trafficking. The basic meaning of these forms of human trafficking and some unique characteristics of each are set forth below, followed by several key principles and concepts that relate to all forms of human trafficking.

More than 180 nations have ratified or acceded to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (the UN TIP Protocol), which defines trafficking in persons and contains obligations to prevent and combat the crime.

The United States' TVPA and the UN TIP Protocol contain similar definitions of human trafficking. The elements of both definitions can be described using a three-element framework focused on the trafficker's 1) acts; 2) means; and 3) purpose. All three elements are essential to form a human trafficking violation.

Workers in the seafood processing and fishing sectors increasingly face forced overtime as a result of increasing demand for shelf-stable seafood, as well as unsafe working conditions.

A Filipina woman and her daughter weave doormats from recycled clothing as part of a program to raise awareness of human trafficking and exploitation.

Forced Labor

Forced Labor, sometimes also referred to as labor trafficking, encompasses the range of activities involved when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person.

The **"acts"** element of forced labor is met when the trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains a person for labor or services.

The **"means"** element of forced labor includes a trafficker's use of force, fraud, or coercion. The coercive scheme can include threats of force, debt manipulation, withholding of pay, confiscation of identity documents, psychological coercion, reputational harm, manipulation of the use of addictive substances, threats to other people, or other forms of coercion.

The **"purpose"** element focuses on the perpetrator's goal to exploit a person's labor or services. There is no limit on the location or type of industry. Traffickers can commit this crime in any sector or setting, whether legal or illicit, including but not limited to agricultural fields, factories, restaurants, hotels, massage parlors, retail stores, fishing vessels, mines, private homes, or drug trafficking operations.

All three elements are essential to constitute the crime of forced labor.

There are certain types of forced labor that are frequently distinguished for emphasis or because they are widespread:

Domestic Servitude

"Domestic servitude" is a form of forced labor in which the trafficker requires a victim to perform work in a private residence. Such circumstances create unique vulnerabilities. Domestic workers are often isolated and may work alone in a house. Their employer often controls their access to food, transportation, and housing. What happens in a private residence is hidden from the world—including from law enforcement and labor inspectors—resulting in barriers to victim identification. Foreign domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to language and cultural barriers, as well as a lack of community ties. Some perpetrators use these types of conditions as part of their coercive schemes to compel the labor of domestic workers with little risk of detection.

Forced Child Labor

The term "forced child labor" describes forced labor schemes in which traffickers compel children to work. Traffickers often target children because they are more vulnerable. Although some children may legally engage in certain forms of work, forcing or coercing children to work remains illegal. Forms of slavery or slavery-like practices—including the sale of children, forced or compulsory child labor, and debt bondage and serfdom of children—continue to exist, despite legal prohibitions and widespread condemnation. 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 and the child's work financially benefits someone outside the child's family; or the denial of food, rest, or schooling to a child who is working.

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking encompasses the range of activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child to engage in a commercial sex act.

The crime of sex trafficking is also understood through the "acts," "means," and "purpose" framework. All three elements are required to establish a sex trafficking crime (except in the case of child sex trafficking where the means are irrelevant).

The **"acts"** element of sex trafficking is met when a trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, patronizes, or solicits another person to engage in commercial sex.

The **"means"** element of sex trafficking occurs when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion. Coercion in the case of sex trafficking includes the broad array of means included in the forced labor definition. These can include threats of serious harm, psychological harm, reputational harm, threats to others, and debt manipulation.

The **"purpose"** element is a commercial sex act. Sex trafficking can take place in private homes, massage parlors, hotels, or brothels, among other locations, as well as on the internet.

Child Sex Trafficking

In cases where an individual engages in any of the specified "acts" with a child (under the age of 18), the means element is irrelevant regardless of whether evidence of force, fraud, or coercion exists. The use of children in commercial sex is prohibited by law in the United States and most countries around the world.

Key Principles and Concept

These key principles and concepts relate to all forms of trafficking in persons, including forced labor and sex trafficking.

Consent

Human trafficking can take place even if the victim initially consented to providing labor, services, or commercial sex acts. The analysis is primarily focused on the trafficker's conduct and not that of the victim. A trafficker can target a victim after a victim applies for a job or migrates to earn a living. The trafficker's exploitative scheme is what matters, not a victim's prior consent or ability to meaningfully consent thereafter. Likewise, in a sex trafficking case, an adult victim's initial willingness to engage in commercial sex acts is not relevant where a perpetrator subsequently uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim and cause them to continue engaging in the same acts. In the case of child sex trafficking, the consent of the victim is never relevant as a child cannot legally consent to commercial sex.

Movement

Neither U.S. law nor international law requires that a trafficker or victim move across a border for a human trafficking offense to take place. Trafficking in persons is a crime of exploitation and coercion, and not movement. Traffickers can use schemes that take victims hundreds of miles away from their homes or exploit them in the same neighborhoods where they were born.

Debt Bondage

"Debt bondage" is focused on human trafficking crimes in which the trafficker's primary means of coercion is debt manipulation. U.S. law prohibits perpetrators from using debts as part of their scheme, plan, or pattern to compel a person to work or engage in commercial sex. Traffickers target some individuals with an initial debt assumed willingly as a condition of future employment, while in certain countries traffickers tell individuals they "inherited" the debt from relatives. Traffickers can also manipulate debts after the economic relationship begins by withholding earnings or forcing the victim to assume debts for expenses like food, housing, or transportation. They can also manipulate debts a victim owes to other people. When traffickers use debts as a means to compel labor or commercial sex, they have committed a crime.

Non-Punishment Principle

A victim-centered and trauma-informed approach is key to successful anti-trafficking efforts. A central tenet to such an approach is that victims of trafficking should not be inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts they committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Effective implementation of the "non-punishment principle," as it is increasingly referred to, not only requires recognizing and embracing the principle in regional and national laws, but also increasing proactive victim identification.

State-Sponsored Human Trafficking

While the TVPA and UN TIP Protocol call on governments to proactively address trafficking crimes, some governments are part of the problem, directly compelling their citizens into sexual slavery or forced labor schemes. From forced labor in local or national public work projects, military operations, and economically important sectors, or as part of government-funded projects or missions abroad, officials use their power to exploit their nationals. To extract this work, governments coerce by threatening the withdrawal of public benefits, withholding salaries, failing to adhere to limits on national service, manipulating the lack of legal status of stateless individuals and members of minority groups, threatening to punish family members, or conditioning services or freedom of movement on labor or sex. In 2019, Congress amended the TVPA to acknowledge that governments can also act as traffickers, referring specifically to a "government policy or pattern" of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers.

Unlawful Recruitment or Use of Child Soldiers

Another manifestation of human trafficking occurs when government forces or any non-state armed group unlawfully recruits or uses children—through force, fraud, or coercion—as soldiers or for labor or services in conflict situations. Children are also used as sex slaves. Sexual slavery, as referred to here, occurs when armed groups force or coerce children to "marry" or be raped by commanders or combatants. Both male and female children are often sexually abused or exploited by members of armed groups and suffer the same types of devastating physical and psychological consequences associated with sex trafficking.

Accountability in Supply Chains

Forced labor is well documented in the private economy, particularly in agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, construction, and domestic work; but no sector is immune. Sex trafficking occurs in several industries as well. Most well-known is the hospitality industry, but the crime also occurs in connection with extractive industries where activities are often remote and lack meaningful government presence. Governments should hold all entities, including businesses, accountable for human trafficking. In some countries, the law provides for corporate accountability in both the civil and criminal justice systems. U.S. law provides such liability for any legal person, including a business that benefits financially from its involvement in a human trafficking scheme, provided that the business knew or should have known of the scheme.

Cultural Barriers to Being Survivor Inclusive

Examining and Overcoming Barriers Perpetuated by Culture

By: Jeri Moomaw

The anti-trafficking movement in the United States and many parts of the world has experienced a paradigm shift in the perception and treatment of survivors of human trafficking. Advocating for the acceptance of survivors as professionals in the anti-trafficking movement has not been easy. More organizations are seeing the benefits of including the expertise of survivors in their anti-trafficking efforts, but challenges remain in scaling this approach globally due to the lack of understanding of trauma and that individuals can overcome and thrive after experiencing human trafficking. The following content seeks to identify cultural barriers to the inclusion and empowerment of survivors along with recommendations for addressing such barriers.

After surviving trafficking situations, individuals are often stigmatized by cultural and societal biases. For example, in many parts of the world, society will deem a child or adult sex trafficking victim as "unclean." Their victimization and subsequent societal devaluation may lead them to experience extreme poverty, public shame, and being prohibited from marrying, as well as the potential for re-exploitation. Cultural barriers to survivor inclusion and empowerment may stem from several factors, such as the region's political stability, religious belief systems, or other culturally specific societal norms that limit the safety, rights, and economic freedom of marginalized individuals and communities. These factors, among others, may prevent survivors from publicly identifying because it would lead to increased marginalization or other negative repercussions, such as being criminalized rather than identified as a victim. Regardless of the circumstances that led an individual to being trafficked, the impact of cultural barriers remains constant: shame and embarrassment that prevent a victim from receiving the services and support needed to permanently exit their trafficking situation and rebuild a healthy and secure life.

Despite these obstacles and with proper support, survivors can meaningfully contribute to the anti-trafficking movement and become "survivor leaders." Including survivor leaders can yield better results for future victims. Below are some tips for culturally informed and meaningful survivor inclusion:

- Overcome personal and professional biases: *"Yes, survivors can heal, grow, and develop into leaders across many career fields!"*
- Encourage local government and NGOs to communicate the importance of and advocate for culturally inclusive anti-trafficking legislation.
- Foster a network of skilled survivor leaders to sustain attention on the issue of cultural responsiveness in the global anti-trafficking field.

Survivor inclusion requires diverse experts contributing valuable insights to reframe the expression of ideas through a culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and equity-based lens. The willingness of governments and anti-trafficking stakeholders to overcome cultural barriers and offer a seat at the table to survivors will bolster the effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts and improve the livelihood of survivors in general.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—UNITED STATES

An American family adopted Abbey from the People's Republic of China when she was 14 months old. The family beat and starved her from the age of 3 and exploited her in domestic servitude. The family kept Abbey confined in a room in their basement without a proper restroom for nearly 14 years. While the family's three biological children attended school, Abbey was denied an education. Abbey repeatedly attempted to escape, but local law enforcement authorities reprimanded and returned her to the abusive household several times. Only after many attempts did Abbey successfully leave her traffickers' custody. She is now pursuing civil and criminal legal action against the family and child protective services.

INDIA

When Miriam boarded a train in the Northern Indian state of Bihar, she thought she was headed for a brighter future. While on the train, she was comforted by a woman who convinced Miriam to accompany her to her home. The woman, with a team of accomplices, first exploited her in domestic servitude and eventually exploited her in sex trafficking. Two other children and one adult from different parts of Bihar were also exploited. Miriam was identified as a child sex trafficking victim and escaped with the aid of local police during a law enforcement operation. A court later convicted the traffickers. A non-profit organization supported the survivors through a trauma-informed and survivor-centered program that provided them services and resources

One Size Does Not Fit All: Equity in Survivor Leadership

Observations from the Field and a Call to Action

By: Christine Cesa, MAICS

The anti-trafficking movement has been working to combat human trafficking for over 20 years. Trailblazers brought the voice and experience of survivors into leadership roles in the movement. Yet work remains to ensure a diverse and inclusive community of survivors become leaders in the anti-trafficking movement. Survivor leaders who have historically had the spotlight do not accurately represent all those who hold lived experience of trafficking. There are clear gaps in representation of the various forms of human trafficking as well as in the characteristics of the survivors, such as sexual orientation, gender, and cultural background.

While anti-trafficking organizations have brought survivors on staff to bring their valuable perspectives to the work, there is still a lack of diverse representation of survivors. Polaris' national survivor-led survey, *In Harm's Way: How Systems Fail Human Trafficking Survivors*, found 59 percent of respondents were labor trafficking survivors and 37 percent survived familial trafficking, which may contradict what people may assume to be the most commonplace experiences of trafficking. In addition, 45 percent of respondents identified as LGBTQI+ and 43 percent as a person of color. Many survivors with these underrepresented experiences or backgrounds have difficulty finding acceptance in organizations and communities, such as faith-based organizations, because they do not match the narrative most often elevated by the organization and the broader field. The anti-trafficking sector can feel like an unwelcoming space to these underrepresented survivors, especially for survivors of forms of exploitation that have yet to be addressed by anti-trafficking organizations or leaders.

When it comes to anti-trafficking organizations working with survivors, individuals may be considered less qualified and not be selected for jobs if their experience does not match the trafficking situations that are more often elevated by that organization and the broader field. There is a need for representation of multiple types of lived experience of human trafficking, including among those who hold decision-making power in organizations. The narrowness of lived experience voices that hold positions of power and influence does not reflect the breadth of knowledge and experience across the community of survivor leaders. It is imperative that organizations do not adopt a single dominant narrative of human trafficking so that individuals with different trafficking experiences are not alienated from accessing or qualifying to receive services or sharing feedback on anti-trafficking responses. The assumption that survivor leaders with homogenous experiences can speak on behalf of all survivors perpetuates the tokenization of survivors with both represented and underrepresented experiences.

As a field, it is time that we care for those who have experienced human trafficking in all its forms. Survivors of varying trafficking experiences, including familial trafficking, labor trafficking, or those whose trafficking experiences are related to their gender or LGBTQI+ status, must be represented for anti-trafficking efforts to serve all survivors appropriately and sufficiently. Meaningful change will only be made when we listen to and include a diverse array of voices in the room. We need to become more inclusive of all lived experiences for our movement to be successful in the next decade and beyond.

The Role of Culture in Human Trafficking and Survivor's Lives

Reflecting on Culture in My Victimization and in My Healing Journey

By: Rafael Bautista

Over the years, I have learned so much more about human trafficking and I continue to learn. The anti-trafficking movement has shown me that culture is one of the most important factors to learning why human trafficking happens, as well as how to overcome challenges after surviving human trafficking. Culture plays a role in one's identity, knowledge, behavior, beliefs, laws, generational traditions, and habits. Culture often originates from and is unique to a specific region or location. Culture can drive vulnerabilities in certain community and country contexts, but at the same time, it can also give survivors the strength and resilience to leave and move on from their trafficking situation. My personal experience as a survivor has shown me this and has been reinforced by my work as a survivor leader and collaborating with fellow survivors.

Unfortunately, there are many cultures around the globe that normalize human trafficking. In some, "there is no labor trafficking—only hard workers." In other cases, culture may be the highest barrier to leaving a trafficking situation and pursuing a path of healing.

In other cultures, migration may be the only way to survive. The people migrating often have high vulnerabilities: they may not have an education or access to basic necessities. They may be suffering from severe poverty or have grown up without support systems in broken homes or communities plagued with violence and other adverse childhood events. Regardless of whether an individual with this background migrates with or without documentation, they may still be among the most vulnerable to human trafficking.

As a survivor of human trafficking, understanding the role culture played in my becoming a victim of human trafficking has been one of the most important steps on the path to healing. Anti-trafficking organizations and efforts should allow space for survivors to understand who they are as a means for identifying the cultural barriers that they must overcome in daily life in order to grow personally and professionally. Providing education to survivors on how to navigate educational, legal, and financial systems in a culturally relevant and trauma-informed way also promotes their sustained success. Furthermore, meaningfully engaging survivors in the anti-trafficking movement can provide vital educational and growth opportunities to survivors. By fully respecting their seat at the table and honoring their life experience and the cultures that have influenced it, we can also learn how to better support survivors throughout their healing journey in a trauma-informed and culturally competent manner.

"Frog in a Well"

Sharing My Journey to Success

By: Harold D' Souza

In every "well" there is a "Frog." The "Frog" thinks that is his world. Similarly, in human trafficking, the victim is under the control of the perpetrator. The victim is made to believe that they are living in the trafficker's world, not knowing there is a better world of happiness, joy, food, fragrance, and freedom outside the clutches of the trafficker or the "well."

There is a proverb in India—going to "America" is going to "SWARG." "SWARG" means "HEAVEN" or "PARADISE." In 2003, I was invited to the United States on an H-1B visa with a $75,000 salary per year plus benefits, as a Business Development Manager. The day I landed in the United States, I learned I had been manipulated, tricked, and trapped. My wife and I were forced to work in a restaurant. My kids were 7 and 4 years old.

Imagine you woke up in a place where you don't know the culture, you don't know the laws, and you don't know what resources are available and how to access them. Imagine that you thought you were going to achieve a better life for yourself and your family but find yourself on a floor with no bed. You're working 16 hours a day. Imagine you have no food and no money because someone you trusted took the small amount of money you had "to keep it safe," and provided you a one-bedroom apartment, then threatened you with arrest and deportation if you didn't continue working without pay. You work so many hours that you can't get home to care for your two small children.

This couldn't happen in the United States of America, could it?
Certainly, this couldn't happen in Cincinnati, could it?

Perpetrators in America use a variation of four words to silence foreign national victims. Traffickers shout to the victims, "I will get you 1) Arrested 2) Handcuffed 3) Jailed 4) Deported." Every immigrant victim of labor trafficking in the United States of America has only one "nickname" used by the trafficker a million times—"ILLEGAL." I was never called 'Harold' by my trafficker, only "ILLEGAL." What happens in the mind of a victim: they begin to believe that they are a "CRIMINAL."

Failure can be a path to success. Turning obstacles into opportunities is my passion, translating pain into passion, purpose, power, and prayers. Yes, I am a "Survivor of Labor Trafficking and Debt Bondage." Today, I have a nonprofit focused on prevention, education, and protection, as well as the empowerment of victims, survivors, vulnerable populations, and community members to combat human trafficking.

A labor inspector speaks with workers on a coffee plantation in South America. Working on isolated fields can increase vulnerability to trafficking as these operations may have little to no governmental oversight and workers often have little community support and limited access to protective services.

TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Deceiving the Watchdogs: How Unscrupulous Manufacturers Conceal Forced Labor and Other Labor Abuses

Globalization—a term used to describe the movement and exchange of people, goods, and services around the globe—has increasingly allowed companies to outsource production to manufacturers in areas with lower costs. In many cases, these companies target countries that have weaker labor protections and environmental safeguards, and less capacity to enforce existing protections. Consumers, advocacy groups, and governments have sought to hold companies sourcing from these manufacturers accountable in the wake of increasing reports of forced labor—including forced child labor—and past high-profile factory disasters, including fires and collapses.

In response to this demand for increased transparency and accountability, companies have embraced a wide variety of voluntary codes of conduct—both individually and industry-wide. They have turned to "social audits" that examine a supplier's treatment of its employees and impact on society, as well as certification bodies, which accredit companies as fulfilling their social-compliance obligations.

Social auditing and certification began as a niche industry, but today the global social-compliance industry exceeds $300 million per year, according to the Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors. A single social audit that does not document violations can draw new customers to a manufacturer and form the basis of lucrative multiyear contracts. But an audit that uncovers serious labor rights and human rights abuses can incur significant remediation costs, reputational costs, and millions of dollars in lost business.

With so much riding on the outcome of a social audit, audited manufacturers have a strong incentive to ensure they pass, even if it means deceiving auditors. A recent study from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, which examined more than 40,000 audits conducted between 2011 and 2017, found that nearly half of all audits—45 percent—were unreliable.

Human rights reporting from NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, Transparentem, and Clean Clothes Campaign have revealed that many manufacturers employ a variety of tactics to conceal evidence of labor trafficking and human rights abuses from auditors. A cottage industry of consultants has emerged to help manufacturers pass audits, in some cases by intimidating workers, creating false employment records to conceal underpayment or underage workers, or, in extreme cases, by outright bribing auditors.

Climate-change-linked events such as wildfires, droughts, flooding, and extreme weather conditions have exacerbated preexisting human trafficking vulnerabilities. While climate change does not discriminate, vulnerable populations such as migrants, women and children, and minority populations are more likely to experience its impacts and, consequently, are likely to become even more vulnerable to exploitation.

Falsifying Records

Recent civil society reports indicate unscrupulous companies may falsify records to conceal the withholding of wages and excessive overtime—both recognized by the ILO as indicators of forced labor. For example, companies may create a second set of fabricated records, known as "double book-keeping," to convince auditors they have been correctly paying workers their wages, retirement contributions, and other benefits when they have not. In other cases, manufacturers may alter pay slips to conceal prohibited wage deductions or overtime work.

Employers may also falsify their workers' identities. Transparentem documented instances where workers claimed employers knowingly solicited falsified national identity cards, to hide the true age of employees under the age of 18. In another case, employers appeared to falsify dental and medical records to conceal underage workers. Similar instances were also noted in which a consultant hired by the factory doctored underage workers' identity cards before auditors could review them.

Concealing Passport Retention

Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation when employers retain their identity documents, such as passports, a common indicator of forced labor recognized by the ILO. The 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report documented numerous instances of employers retaining migrant workers' passports, from migrant Bangladeshi workers in Maldives, Bhutanese students in work-study programs in Japan and Malaysia, and Zimbabwean domestic workers in Oman.

Human rights groups have documented instances where migrant workers' access to their passports is manipulated to deceive auditors, such as when passports were stored in guarded lockers, but the workers were only given keys and able to access their documents during audits.

Manipulating Workers

Employers may coach workers to lie about conditions, such as their pay, working hours, or overtime. For example, Human Rights Watch found evidence of factory managers intimidating workers into lying, sometimes telling workers that a negative audit could cost them their jobs. Even workers who wish to share the realities of their conditions with auditors are stymied as most audits take place at the factories. Workers may not feel comfortable speaking up when surrounded by their supervisor and/or colleagues. Although auditors typically conduct individual worker interviews, managers can easily ascertain which workers participated in interviews, according to a Human Rights Watch report.

In other instances, the manipulation of workers extends beyond coaching. In some cases, manufacturers have instructed underage workers to hide from auditors, either off-site or in hidden areas of the factory during the audit. In extreme cases, auditors are invited to "model factories" that ostensibly comply with regulations, while the bulk of actual manufacturing is conducted at other facilities.

Recommendations

There is no simple solution to address the challenges of audit deception. Manufacturers have an incentive to deceive auditors precisely because audits increasingly affect brands' decisions on which suppliers they will and will not use. Nongovernmental organizations have recommended practices that can enhance worker protections, including:

- Conducting more frequent and extensive audits.
- Ensuring that audits are unannounced.
- Interviewing workers offsite and away from management.
- Involving workers, former workers, and survivors of forced labor in the design of the audit.
- Prioritizing sustained worker engagement beyond the audit itself.
- Giving workers access to anonymous feedback surveys and effective third-party grievance mechanisms.
- Providing rights training to workers.
- Supporting labor organizing.
- Ensuring greater supply-chain mapping and transparency.

NEPAL—KUWAIT

Feba's neighbor in Nepal helped her obtain a visa for Kuwait and a passport to enable her travel for employment. Trusting her neighbor, she departed for Kuwait with a connecting flight through Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi, a trafficker who had coordinated with her neighbor abducted Feba and held her for six months. The trafficker then transported her to Kuwait and forced her to work in domestic servitude at his relative's house where the relative also sexually abused her. Feba lived in constant fear for four years. When she eventually confronted her employer, he called the police and falsely accused her of theft. The police arrested Feba, who spent eight weeks in detention before the authorities identified her as a victim. Although Feba returned to Nepal, she continued to experience the trauma of the violence she endured. A counselor from an anti-trafficking NGO prepared a care plan and provided the psychosocial support Feba needed. Feba currently works in a coffee factory and has started goat farming with income-generating support provided through the anti-trafficking NGO.

Children collect usable goods from a garbage heap. Children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in hazardous industries, and they often face severe health consequences that last their entire lives.

TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking

Boys represent the fastest-growing segment of identified human trafficking victims. UNODC's 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, released in January 2023, notes that the percentage of boys identified as victims of human trafficking more than quintupled between 2004 and 2020—a much larger increase than for men, women, or girls. The same report notes males (including boys and men) account for 40 percent of all identified victims of human trafficking. While women constitute about twice the percentage of identified trafficking victims as men (42 percent to 23 percent), the percentage of trafficking victims who are boys and girls is almost identical (17 percent and 18 percent, respectively).

The growing awareness of boys exploited in human trafficking is fairly recent. While male trafficking victims are receiving more attention than in years past, "social and health services as well as legal and advocacy frameworks still predominantly focus on female victims of sexual exploitation," according to the UNODC report. Media and civil-society groups alike consistently refer to boys and adolescent male human trafficking victims as "unseen and unhelped," a "silenced minority," "invisible," or "secret victims."

A recent Human Trafficking Institute article suggests that the widely held societal belief—as prevalent among policymakers as among the public—that males are perpetrators, not victims, is a significant part of the problem. Many cultures cling to traditional views of masculinity and femininity that highlight female vulnerability and male dominance, while failing to contemplate male vulnerability. In short, "[g]ender norms and masculine stereotypes hinder identification of male trafficking victims," according to the UNODC. This false perception plays out in several ways that are damaging to boys and men who have experienced trafficking.

- **Inadequate identification and protection of boys and men.** Too often, law enforcement and other authorities do not perceive boys and men as victims. For example, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) cautions in its Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide that "[t]here is often a presumption that [human trafficking] victims are female" and that this false assumption impedes proper screening and protection for male victims of human trafficking. To the extent that boys and men are perceived as potential trafficking victims, there is a false perception, according to DOJ, "that male victims are only exploited for labor or that their involvement in commercial sex is always voluntary." When male survivors of trafficking escape, they are more likely to be neglected by governments and are at greater risk of being penalized, such as by being detained for irregular migration status or arrested for crimes they have committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

- **Boys or men who are victims of human trafficking are less likely than girls or women to self-identify.** Research shows males are less likely than females to self-identify as victims of human trafficking, a fact rooted in stereotypical gender roles in which males are supposed to be strong. Male victims are more likely to view their situation as due to bad luck or even their own gullibility, rather than due to being exploited. Male victims of sex trafficking also may be reluctant to self-identify if they believe they will face a significant risk of stigma. They face multiple societal barriers to self-identifying as trafficking victims, including stigma associated with LGBTQI+ status or same-sex conduct, as well as the taboo nature of discussions around sexual violence against males. LGBTQI+ persons, in general, also face a higher incidence of risk factors for human trafficking.

- **Inadequate support services for boys and men who have experienced trafficking.** Evidence suggests that there are few trafficking-related resources tailored for the needs of male victims. The Human Trafficking Institute reviewed 150 organizations receiving U.S. federal trafficking-related grants in 2018. Of the 119 organizations addressing both labor trafficking and sex trafficking, only one had a dedicated program for male victims. And of the 31 other organizations that only focused on sex trafficking, none had a program solely focused on the needs of male victims. Around the globe, including in the United States, there is a severe shortage of programs to meet the needs of male victims of trafficking. The 2022 TIP Report reported a vast majority of countries either had inadequate assistance available or lacked services specifically for male victims. The Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has emphasized that "gender-specific anti-trafficking programs, female-centric services, and awareness campaigns that use non-inclusive language and imagery can contribute to harmful stigma affecting a male's willingness to disclose the trauma they experienced."

Systemically, there are no easy fixes. Some potential solutions include:

- **Targeted public awareness efforts** to increase knowledge of the problem, promote cultural change, and help victims come forward.

- **Training for law enforcement, health, and criminal justice personnel** to understand the prevalence and specific needs of male victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

- **Safe housing** to meet the needs of male trafficking victims. Many countries do not have shelters for male trafficking victims and homeless shelters are often not an adequate solution. Domestic-violence clinics often cater to women and may not be accessible to male victims.

- **Comprehensive medical care, including mental health and psychosocial support,** that is trauma-informed and culturally appropriate. Peer-to-peer counseling may be effective as well.

- **Employment assistance** including education, skills training, and job placement.

While boys and men who have experienced human trafficking face tremendous challenges, awareness of their plight is growing. Indeed, the first TIP Report, published in 2001, acknowledged that the U.S. government's initial monitoring and awareness of this issue in 1994 focused on "trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes." Since then, however, the TIP Report has expanded as understanding of the issue has grown and now covers sex trafficking and labor trafficking of all people. Additional investments in prevalence studies can reveal misperceptions and biases in the detection of victims and be used to focus assistance where it is most needed. As more data emerges, the narrative around trafficking is gradually changing to acknowledge the reality that anyone, regardless of sex or gender identity, can be targeted by human traffickers.

NGO staff provide emergency unconditional cash assistance to a new mother facing retrenchment in the wake of post-COVID workforce reductions, which put many thousands of foreign migrant families in extremely precarious situations across Asia.

TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Online Recruitment of Vulnerable Populations for Forced Labor

As job seekers increasingly use the internet to find employment opportunities around the world, a lack of safeguards can enable traffickers by providing unfettered access to vulnerable and marginalized populations. Usership of social media and mobile applications in particular have proliferated around the world due to increasing digital connectivity, smartphone adoption in developing economies, and societal shifts to online spaces related to the pandemic. Governments must consider implications for vulnerable populations who are increasingly exposed to a largely unregulated and unmonitored virtual environment.

Public and private invitation-only social media platforms, classified advertisement websites, and employment messaging forums are leveraged by jobseekers to access legitimate local and global job markets. However, simultaneously, predatory recruiters and traffickers also use these avenues to identify vulnerable and marginalized individuals. There are hundreds of classified advertisement websites and employment messaging forums, each of which commonly targets a particular geographic region or country, making monitoring challenging. On these platforms, jobseekers are inundated with potentially misleading advertisements and scams, making identifying fraudulent recruiters and distinguishing them from legitimate offers difficult. These recruiters may also employ deceptive tactics, evading detection by authorities and targeting workers unaware of their rights, including by obtaining false identity documentation for potential workers and charging high recruitment fees.

Online dating platforms are also used by traffickers to identify vulnerable and marginalized individuals for exploitation, including for forced labor. Reportedly, traffickers use the promise of marriage or a romantic relationship to lure young women away from their homes and support networks, making them less likely to attempt escape once forced into labor trafficking or sex trafficking. Traffickers may also present themselves as recruiters or modeling scouts on dating platforms and promise unsuspecting individuals lucrative career offers. Anonymity or use of false information included in online profiles allows traffickers to misrepresent themselves and deceive targeted individuals.

Governments, civil society, and technology companies all have a role in addressing the misuse of digital tools. A crucial part of these efforts includes enhancing awareness of misuse of technology and increasing digital literacy, which is critical to protect users from exploitation, disinformation, privacy intrusions, and financial scams. Understanding the signs of potential exploitation in online spaces is key for individuals to protect themselves. Therefore, developing awareness campaigns to educate job seekers about their rights, protect individuals from fraudulent online relationships, and share the resources available when obtaining employment abroad or working with a licensed and regulated labor

recruiter are crucial. Some civil society organizations deploy their own technology platforms to advance workers' access to pre-departure information on their rights, safe recruitment channels, responsible employers, and secure grievance mechanisms if issues occur.

Governments and technology companies, working closely with civil society, can take steps to prevent fraudulent and exploitative recruitment practices online that often lead to human trafficking. Mandates for employers to provide proof of legitimacy before advertising on technology platforms could increase jobseekers' access to validated employers. Technology companies should continue to invest in methods, informed by workers and those with lived experiences of human trafficking, to increase detection of fraudulent and predatory behavior, while being mindful of issues of privacy, trust, and security. Governments should also bolster training and resources for law enforcement to detect and monitor fraudulent offers and investigate human trafficking online.

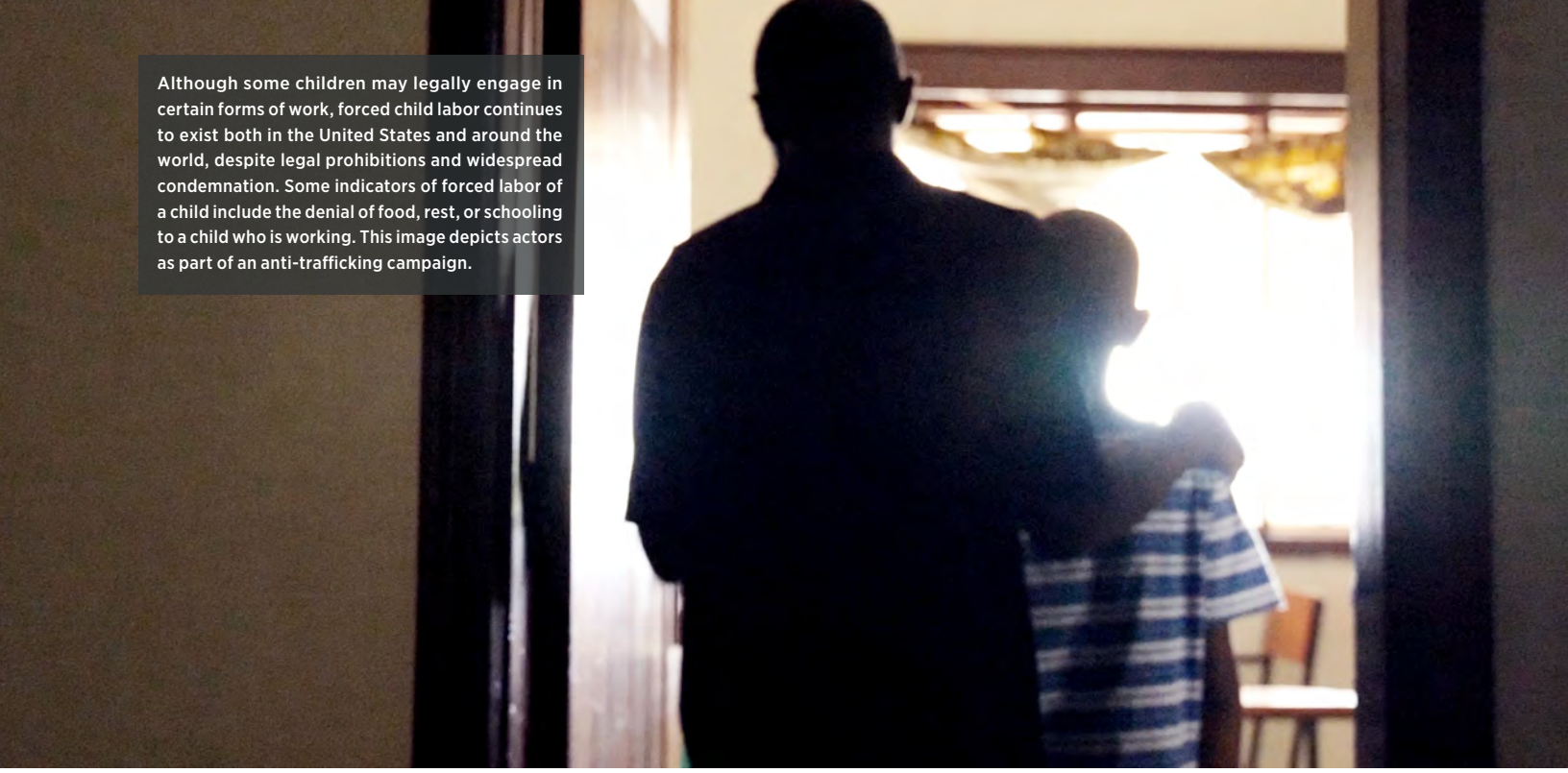
Governments can mandate or provide incentives for technology companies to take measures to prevent the use of their platforms to recruit victims or perpetrate human trafficking crimes. Enhanced laws and policies for regulating recruitment agencies' activity online can also contribute to more transparent online interactions between employers and individuals.

The private sector, especially technology companies, must recognize the dangers of unchecked access to vulnerable and marginalized populations, who may be unaware of the risk of online communication with strangers. In recent years, some technology companies have bolstered their trust and safety efforts, including on child protection. However, these efforts require continual improvement and often do not address vulnerable adults also at risk of trafficking. Technology companies should also provide safe mechanisms for users to report suspicious or fraudulent behavior, bolster identification and monitoring of illegal behaviors, and share best practices within their industry. Proactive strategies to ban potential traffickers and to address users exhibiting predatory behavior (in accordance with a platform's terms of service) as well as increasing education for users around online safety is necessary to create a safe and inclusive virtual environment.

Increasingly, PRC-based organized crime syndicates posing as labor brokers use social media to recruit East African and Asian workers with English proficiency or technical backgrounds for promising lucrative jobs supposedly in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and elsewhere in the region. Upon arrival, victims are transported to large compounds, known as "scam factories," located in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and the Philippines, where their passports are confiscated and they experience physical and sexual violence. Traffickers force victims to defraud strangers in online cryptocurrency and romance scams and illegal gambling operations.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, fraudulent recruiters use public and private social media spaces to identify vulnerable young women with few economic opportunities for exploitation as domestic workers in several Gulf states. Recruiters build rapport with the victims in chatrooms and digital spaces, often promising employment as teachers, and collect a recruitment fee to obtain fake passports and visas, deceiving victims who believe the documentation is legitimate. The victims incur debts for airline tickets—often preventing them from leaving their trafficking situation—are forced to work for long hours in inhumane conditions, and experience physical and sexual abuse by their traffickers.

NGO staff provide smartphone apps to migrant fishermen to empower at-risk workers with knowledge of their rights and protections in the workplace, and assistance on how to get help if needed.



Although some children may legally engage in certain forms of work, forced child labor continues to exist both in the United States and around the world, despite legal prohibitions and widespread condemnation. Some indicators of forced labor of a child include the denial of food, rest, or schooling to a child who is working. This image depicts actors as part of an anti-trafficking campaign.

TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Protecting Victims of Trafficking: The Non-Punishment Principle

A victim-centered and trauma-informed approach is key to successful anti-trafficking efforts. A central tenet to such an approach is that victims of trafficking should not be inappropriately penalized for unlawful acts they committed as a direct result of being trafficked. The non-punishment principle, as it is increasingly referred to, seeks to ensure that governments recognize this concept and implement measures to provide protection to victims of trafficking from inappropriate punishment and further victimization.

Human trafficking is an inherently exploitative crime, in which victims experience a multitude of abuses at the hands of their traffickers. In some situations, traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to pressure their victims to carry out unlawful activities such as immigration-related offenses or the use of false documents. Other cases are more extreme and involve forced criminality, including offenses such as commercial sex, forced begging, theft, illicit production or distribution of drugs, violent crime, and engaging in the exploitation of other trafficking victims. These individuals are often held liable and face various forms of punishment including fines, detention, prosecution, conviction, and deportation.

The consequences of punishing victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked are far-reaching and profoundly harmful, not only to the survivors themselves but to larger anti-trafficking efforts. These negative effects impact their daily lives by placing barriers to securing housing, obtaining employment, or accessing banking services due to their arrest records and the stigmas that continue to follow them. Punishing victims can, in some cases, directly subject them to further trauma and re-victimization and hinder access to justice. Simultaneously, the fear of punishment often undermines anti-trafficking efforts, as victims are afraid to come forward to seek protection and assistance.

NIGERIA—MALI

A trafficker disguised as an employment agent promised Adanna, a university student in Edo State, Nigeria, a sales job in Europe. They instead took her to Mali where she was handed from one trafficker to another, starved, and physically abused. Adanna was coerced and groomed into sex trafficking through various methods, including by the trafficker manipulating traditional "juju" rituals. After one year, a Malian government agency identified Adanna as a victim of sex trafficking and repatriated her back to Nigeria. She received several years of holistic recovery services from an anti-trafficking organization, including counseling, legal and medical services, livelihood support, vocational skills training, and start-up capital for a small business. She is now a thriving business owner and survivor advocate.

V.C.L. and A.N. v. the United Kingdom:

In February 2021, the European Court of Human Rights addressed the issue of non-punishment of trafficking victims directly. At the core of its holding, the Court emphasized the importance of victim identification and the need to take such status into account when making prosecutorial decisions:

"In order for the prosecution of a victim or potential victim of trafficking to demonstrate respect for the freedoms guaranteed by Article 4 [of the European Convention on Human Rights], his or her early identification is of paramount importance... [G]iven that an individual's status as a victim of trafficking may affect whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute and whether it is in the public interest to do so, any decision on whether or not to prosecute a potential victim of trafficking should—insofar as possible—only be taken once a trafficking assessment has been made by a qualified person... Once a trafficking assessment has been made by a qualified person, any subsequent prosecutorial decision would have to take that assessment into account."

In 2000, the United States adopted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which articulated the U.S. Congress' understanding of the principle:

> *"Victims of severe forms of trafficking should not be inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked... "*

The UN TIP Protocol does not specifically address the non-punishment of trafficking victims. However, since 2002, the UN has produced various non-binding guiding documents and reports, encouraging states to adopt non-punishment provisions within their domestic legal frameworks.

Regional bodies and states took notice, passing regional and national laws that reflected the principle of non-punishment. For example, in 2005, the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings became the first treaty to codify the non-punishment principle:

> *Article 26: Each Party shall, in accordance with the basic principles of its legal system, provide for the possibility of not imposing penalties on victims for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they have been compelled to do so.*

In 2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children included a similar provision:

> *Article 14(7): Each party shall, subject to its domestic laws, rules, regulations and policies, and in appropriate cases, consider not holding victims of trafficking in persons criminally or administratively liable, for unlawful acts committed by them, if such acts are directly related to the acts of trafficking.*

Notably, none of these provisions call for an absolute prohibition on the punishment of victims of human trafficking, recognizing that victims may, in some instances, face some form of punishment for their involvement in various unlawful acts. However, at their core, they reflect the idea that states should take steps to ensure that victims and survivors are not inappropriately punished for unlawful acts they have committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

A survivor of human trafficking spends time outdoors at a shelter in Kenya. This woman collaborated with the photographer and provided her consent to be portrayed in this candid snapshot.

Recognizing and embracing the non-punishment principle in regional and national laws are important first steps, but effective implementation requires proactive efforts to identify victims while using victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches. This position was reinforced in a ground-breaking European Court of Human Rights case, V.C.L. and A.N. v. the United Kingdom, which addressed the question of non-punishment for the first time in an international court. Additionally, in June of 2022, the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons at the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime made key recommendations to the Conference of Parties to consider.

Working Group on Trafficking in Persons of the UN Transnational Organized Crime Convention: Select Recommendations on Implementing the Non-Punishment Principle

- States parties are encouraged to consider providing, in accordance with their domestic law, that victims of trafficking in persons are not to be inappropriately punished or prosecuted for acts that traffickers compelled them to commit or that they committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked and, where appropriate, provide access to remedies if they are punished or prosecuted for such acts and, accordingly, establish, as appropriate, domestic laws, guidelines or policies that espouse these principles.

- States parties should make efforts to provide specialized training for all criminal justice practitioners, including investigators, prosecutors and other front-line officers, as well as providers of social services, bearing in mind the non-punishment principle and the need for trauma-informed support for trafficking victims, taking into account different factors, including age, gender, culture and disability, and special needs, noting that such training can minimize their re-traumatization and ensure an understanding of the impact of trauma on the individual person.

- States parties are encouraged to assess their policies and procedures with a view to eliminating any practices that might contribute to re-victimization, and in this regard should consult, as appropriate, with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other eleme nts of civil society, such as individuals who have been victims of trafficking in persons.

- States parties, in accordance with the fundamental principles of their domestic law, should consider taking steps to develop and integrate a victim-centered approach to enhance the proactive and timely identification of trafficking victims and promote such practices through regional and international organizations.

BRAZIL

When Salomao was a young man, he left his impoverished community in northeastern Brazil to find work. With limited resources and far from home, Salomao began living and working in deplorable conditions at a large coffee farm in Minas Gerais; his employer did not pay him a regular salary or report Salomao as an employee in government systems. Salomao worked long hours and slept on a thin pallet in a crowded dormitory without running water. The farm was isolated and, when he and other workers asked about earning a salary or tried to leave, the foreman threatened them with beatings. Forty years after he began working at the farm, Salomao developed pneumonia and was hospitalized; healthcare workers were alarmed by his poor health and realized he had no identity documents, which led them to contact a social worker. Authorities conducted an audit of the coffee farm and found dozens of other workers in similar conditions indicative of forced labor. Salomao is currently receiving medical care and support to obtain lost wages; his employer is under investigation for the mistreatment of the workers.

Southeast Asia has seen a rise in "romance scams" in which women are fraudulently recruited to enter into a fake online relationship with and extract money from unsuspecting targets.

TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Human Trafficking and Cyber Scam Operations

All over the world, we are still unraveling the complex and multifaceted ways in which traffickers—from individual criminals to heavily resourced crime syndicates—adapted to and thrived during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know the sudden interruption of migration dynamics, bans on public gatherings, the closure of entertainment establishments, and the cessation of entire industries, stalled human trafficking operations in some countries. In other places, however, traffickers pivoted to take advantage of these changes by shifting their strategies and leveraging pandemic-related economic hardships, increased global youth unemployment and international travel restrictions to exploit thousands of adults and children in a trend that has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry over the last two years: forced criminality in cyber scam operations.

Casinos and shell companies operating in unused hotels and other rented and bespoke commercial spaces have become hotspots for this growing criminal activity—especially within remote special economic zones, border towns, and other jurisdictionally complex geographic areas known for human rights impunity and minimal law enforcement penetration. Fearing significant downturns in revenue stemming from pandemic-related restrictions, and witnessing widespread unemployment during the pandemic, traffickers in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Ghana, and Türkiye—including some with connections to the People's Republic of China (PRC)—saw an opportunity. They used fake job listings to recruit adults and children from dozens of countries, including Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the PRC, the Philippines, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

Rather than fulfilling their advertised employment promises, many of these companies began forcing the recruits to run internet scams directed at international targets and subjecting them to a wide range of abuses and violations—including withheld travel and identity documentation; imposition of arbitrary debt; restricted access to food, water, medicine, communication, and movement; and threats, beatings, and electric shocks. The scam operations include quota-based fraudulent sales; illegal online gambling and investment schemes; and romance scams, in which the victim is forced to enter into a fake online relationship with and extract money from unsuspecting targets. Traffickers force the victims to work up to 15 hours a day and, in some cases, "resell" the victims to other scam operations or subject them to sex trafficking if they do not agree to fraudulently recruit additional members, or if the victims do not meet impossibly high revenue quotas. Pandemic-related travel bans have been used as excuses to keep victims captive under the guise of adherence to public health measures. There are even reports of casino-based cyber scam operators brutally murdering workers who try to escape.

Civil society groups worldwide have documented thousands of cases in recent years, with more than 10,000 estimated victims remaining in exploitation in individual compounds in Cambodia alone. In one case, an unemployed 26-year-old woman from the Philippines responded to a Facebook post offering call center jobs to English speakers. Several months pregnant and hoping to earn money before having her baby, she traveled to Cambodia to begin work, only to be flown to a shuttered hotel casino in Sihanoukville and locked in a cell without food or water for days. Her captors detained and abused her for months, forcing her to create fake profiles on dating apps and other social media platforms to lure people into fraudulent cryptocurrency and other investment schemes under impossible sales quotas. She managed to escape but, tragically, not before the loss of her unborn child.

NGOs have received an overwhelming amount of outreach via social media with similar stories; and many have decried a lack of global resources, capacity, or political will to begin to make a dent in the problem. The cyber scam industry often preys on older individuals with highly technical educational backgrounds—a demographic most authorities are unaccustomed to monitoring for trafficking vulnerabilities. Families desperate to be reunited with loved ones have turned to local authorities or made impassioned appeals to members of nearby diplomatic missions, only to be ignored or turned away. Survivors who escape with their lives are often met with administrative or criminal charges for immigration violations at home or in the countries to which they fled, rather than being identified as trafficking victims and having a chance to benefit from protection services. Many also owe large recruitment fees to locally based recruiters, exacerbating their vulnerability to threats, exploitative debt, and re-trafficking when they return home. Watchdog organizations have traced beneficial ownership directly to high-level officials in some countries.

Although this landscape is bleak, some countries have begun to mobilize resources and strategies to locate their citizens, remove them from their exploitative circumstances, and even initiate accountability processes, despite the aforementioned dangers and jurisdictional complexities. In 2022, Taiwan located and repatriated hundreds of individuals from cyber scam operations in Cambodia and indicted dozens of Taiwanese individuals allegedly complicit in their initial recruitment. In 2021, Laos began cooperating with international authorities to recover Lao victims from the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Bokeo and, despite access challenges and the pervasive impediment of local official corruption, initiated investigations into labor trafficking allegations.

Governments hoping to address this growing trafficking problem should strive to increase awareness-raising among vulnerable communities, including through information campaigns, pre-departure trainings, and enhanced screenings to detect vague, abusive, or missing contract provisions for those migrating for work abroad. They should also collect and share with the public, law enforcement, and international partners information on known fraudulent recruitment channels. In turn, judicial authorities should prioritize the investigation, prosecution, conviction, sentencing, and incarceration of recruiters, brokers, and casino owners and operators knowingly perpetrating forced criminality in online cyber scam operations. Stakeholder ministries must train their diplomats, law enforcement officers, and border and judicial officials on how to detect and assist in these cases domestically and abroad to ensure victims are identified and provided access to robust protection services, rather than penalized solely for crimes they committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Civil society groups have also pointed to an urgent need for capacity building among social workers to absorb a fast-growing case load of profoundly traumatized survivors, who will need advanced reintegrative support as they return to their home communities. Finally, as no government can do this work alone, governments around the world must foster, cooperate with, and enhance their support to a free and healthy civil society, rather than restricting space for NGOs and complicating their ability to benefit from international donor activity. With these steps, countries can build deterrent power while better assisting their citizens in the search for safe employment prospects through safe migration channels and regular labor pathways—thereby constructing a preventative architecture around key vulnerabilities that cyber scammers are eagerly exploiting in the wake of the pandemic.

UZBEKISTAN—KAZAKHSTAN

Alexia was a teenager when she left home to escape her abusive stepfather. She travelled from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan without proper documentation and found her first job as a dishwasher. While taking a cab one day, the driver overheard Alexia's story and offered her a well-paying job. The cab driver took Alexia to the city of Shymkent, where he sold her to a woman for $215. The trafficker kept Alexia in a room and forced her to engage in commercial sex. One of the individuals she encountered helped her to escape, but since Alexia did not have the proper documents to return home, she returned to Shymkent where she could only find short-term jobs. Her employer offered to help her but instead exploited and abused her again in sex trafficking. When she gave birth to a daughter in 2021, the traffickers took her child. An NGO identified Alexia as a trafficking victim and reunited her with her daughter as a result of a law enforcement action with cooperation from an NGO.

A survivor of human trafficking poses for a portrait series highlighting the trauma and resilience of trafficking survivors and individuals displaced by conflict. The project aims to advocate for increased access to psycho-social support for survivors. For this photo story, this individual shared how they would like to be photographed.

CHILD SOLDIERS PREVENTION ACT LIST

Section 402 of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, as amended (CSPA) requires publication in the annual TIP Report of a list of foreign governments identified during the previous year as having governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces, or government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers, as defined in the CSPA. These determinations cover the reporting period beginning April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023.

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, police, or other security forces;
ii. any person under 18 years of age who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
iii. any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security 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 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, 2023, and effective throughout Fiscal Year 2024, these restrictions will apply to the listed countries, absent a presidential 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 and domestic media outlets.

Please note that the 2023 Child Soldiers Prevention Act list was not final at the time of releasing the 2023 TIP Report. This section will be updated as soon as possible.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS THE TRAFFICKER: STATE-SPONSORED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

While the TVPA and the UN TIP Protocol call on governments to proactively address trafficking crimes, some governments are part of the problem, directly compelling their citizens into sex trafficking or forced labor. From forced labor in local or national public work projects, military operations, economically important sectors, or as part of government-funded projects or missions abroad to sexual slavery on government compounds, officials use their power to exploit their nationals. To extract this work or service, governments coerce by threatening the withdrawal of public benefits, withholding salaries, failing to adhere to limits on national service, manipulating the lack of legal status of stateless individuals and other minority groups, threatening to punish family members, or conditioning services, food, or freedom of movement on labor or sex.

In 2019, Congress amended the TVPA to acknowledge that governments can also act as traffickers, referring specifically to a "government policy or pattern" of human trafficking, human trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers. While the TVPA already directs the Secretary of State to consider the extent to which officials participated in, facilitated, condoned, or were otherwise complicit in trafficking when determining tier rankings, this new section more directly links government involvement in trafficking crimes to a Tier 3 ranking.

The 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report includes the following 11 governments with a documented "policy or pattern" of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers:

Afghanistan

Burma

China, People's Republic of

Cuba

Eritrea

Iran

Korea, Democratic People's Republic of

Russia

South Sudan

Syria

Turkmenistan

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, consultations with authorities and organizations in 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 throughout the year on government progress in addressing human trafficking.

U.S. diplomatic posts and domestic agencies reported on the human 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 covering human trafficking issues year-round. The 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report covers government efforts undertaken from April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023.

Tier Placement

The Department places each country in this Report onto one of four tiers, as mandated by the TVPA. This placement is based not on the size of a country's problem but on the extent of government efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking (see page 72-75), 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 crime. Rather, a Tier 1 ranking indicates that a government has made efforts to address the problem that meet the TVPA's minimum standards. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, governments need to demonstrate appreciable progress each year in combating trafficking. Tier 1 represents a responsibility rather than a reprieve.

Tier rankings and narratives in the 2023 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 crimes;
- criminal penalties prescribed for human trafficking crimes 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 traffickers;
- 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 with access to primary health care, counseling, and shelter, allowing them to recount their trafficking experiences to trained 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 fees to prospective migrants; and
- governmental 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 nongovernmental 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.

A Guide to the Tiers

Tier 1

Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

Tier 2

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:

- the estimated number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing and the country is not taking proportional concrete actions; or
- 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.

Tier 3

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

The TVPA, as amended, lists additional factors to determine whether a country should be on Tier 2 (or Tier 2 Watch List) versus Tier 3:

- the extent to which the country is a country of origin, transit, or destination for severe forms of trafficking;
- 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;
- 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;
- the extent to which the government is devoting sufficient budgetary resources to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, convict and sentence traffickers; and obtain restitution for victims of human trafficking; and
- the extent to which the government is devoting sufficient budgetary resources to protect victims and prevent the crime from occurring.

In addition, the TVPA directs the Secretary of State to consider, as proof of a country's failure to make significant efforts to fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, a government policy or pattern of: trafficking; trafficking in government-funded programs; forced labor (in government-affiliated medical services, agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, or other sectors); sexual slavery in government camps, compounds, or outposts; or employing or recruiting child soldiers..

The TVPA also 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. The Secretary of State is authorized to waive the automatic downgrade only once, in that third year, based on credible evidence that a waiver is justified because the government has a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute making significant efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is devoting sufficient resources to implement the plan. The following year, a country must either go up to Tier 2 or down to Tier 3. Finally, the TVPA limits a country to one year on Tier 2 Watch List after that country received a waiver to stay on the Watch List and was subsequently downgraded to Tier 3.

Funding Restrictions for Tier 3 Countries

Pursuant to the TVPA, governments of countries on Tier 3 may be subject to certain restrictions on foreign assistance, whereby the President may determine not to provide U.S. government nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance as defined in the TVPA. In addition, the President may determine to withhold funding for government official or employee participation in educational and cultural exchange programs in the case of 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 their best efforts to deny any loans or other uses of the institutions' funds to a designated Tier 3 country for most purposes (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 these restrictions if necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations, including women and girls, and children.

Applicable assistance restrictions apply for the next Fiscal Year, which begins October 1, 2023.

TVPA 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.

SYRIA

After Rafi's father joined ISIS, he coerced Rafi's Iraqi mother to travel to Syria to join him. From the age of 8, Rafi was indoctrinated with propaganda encouraging him to join the militant group as a "Cub of the Caliphate." At age 10, ISIS forced him to begin military training with other young boys and threatened him with beatings or death if he did not comply. ISIS then separated Rafi from his family and forced him to participate in military exercises at a separate camp alongside adults and other children, where he was exposed to traumatic violence daily. Eventually, Rafi and other Syrians and foreigners suspected of ISIS links were detained by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Rafi remains in SDF detention in unsanitary and dangerous conditions, and he has been unable to contact his mother or access recovery resources or psycho-social services.

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 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 a demonstrably increasing capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted or sentenced such acts.

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 or enable 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 a demonstrably increasing capacity of such government to obtain such data, shall be presumed not to have vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted, or sentenced such acts.

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.

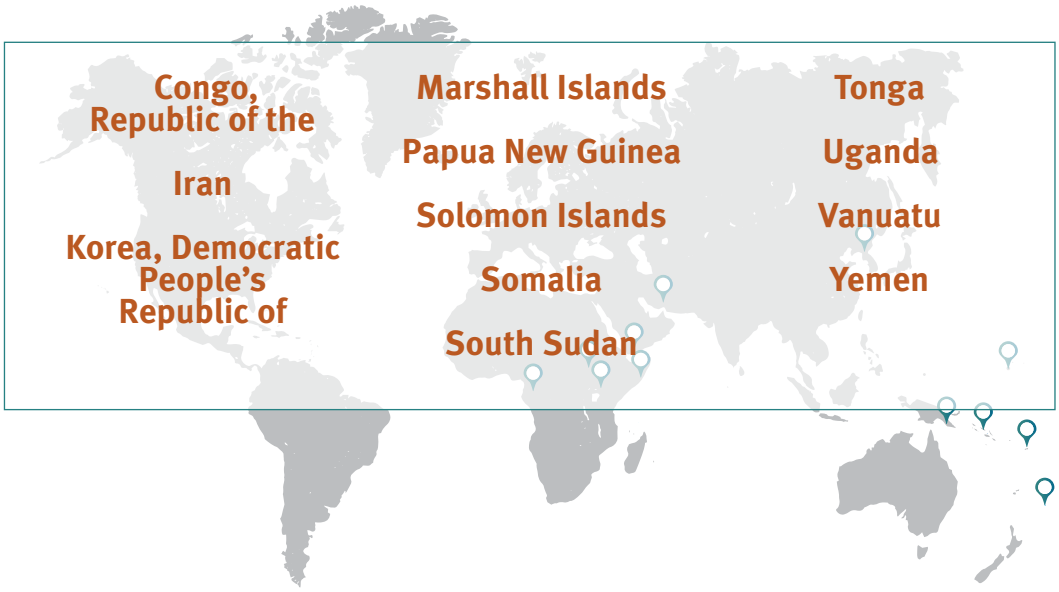
11. Whether the government of the country achieves appreciable progress in eliminating severe forms of trafficking when compared to the assessment in the previous year.

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.

SWEETNESS
HAS A COST

Countries in the 2023 TIP Report that are not Party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime



GLOBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA

The 2003 reauthorization of the TVPA 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
2016	14,939 (1,038)	9,072 (717)	68,453 (17,465)	25
2017	17,471 (869)	7,135 (332)	96,960 (23,906)	5
2018	11,096 (457)	7,481 (259)	85,613 (11,009)	5
2019	11,841 (1,024)	9,548 (498)	118,932 (13,875)	7
2020	9,876 (1,115)	5,011 (337)	109,216 (14,448)	16
2021	10,572 (1,379)	5,260 (374)	90,354 (21,219)	15
2022	15,159 (2,670)	5,577 (528)	115,324 (24,340)	27

The above statistics are estimates derived from data provided by foreign governments and other sources and reviewed by the Department of State. Aggregate data fluctuates from one year to the next due to the hidden nature of trafficking crimes, dynamic global events, shifts in government efforts, and a lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified.

A survivor of human trafficking reflects on her journey. As part of a photo project, the photographer collaborated with this survivor to understand how she would like to be presented.

2023 TIP REPORT HEROES

Each year, the Department of State honors individuals around the world who have devoted their lives to the fight against human trafficking. These individuals include NGO workers, lawmakers, government officials, survivors of human trafficking, and concerned citizens. They are recognized for their tireless efforts—despite some working in challenging environments where human trafficking concerns remain pervasive and facing resistance, opposition, or threats to their lives—to protect victims, punish offenders, and mitigate the underlying factors that cause vulnerabilities traffickers often target.

For more information about current and past TIP Report Heroes, please visit the TIP Report Heroes Global Network at **www.tipheroes.org.**

PUREZA LOPES LOYOLA

BRAZIL

Pureza Lopes Loyola is a respected activist whose three-year quest to find her son led the Government of Brazil to create the Mobile Inspection Group (GEFM) in 1995. Brazil's GEFM brought together federal police officers and labor prosecutors to identify and support thousands of victims of labor exploitation, including labor trafficking, annually.

Ms. Lopes Loyola's search for her son led her through gold mines, charcoal production units, and farms. She discovered a pervasive system of workers forced to cut down large expanses of the Amazon rainforest to convert the area into pasture for cattle. Traveling from farm to farm in search of her son, she discovered the inner workings of exploitative practices like forced labor. Employers regularly confiscated workers' identity documents, controlled workers by keeping them in debt, and perpetrated acts of terrible cruelty. She witnessed and heard dramatic accounts of workers threatened or killed when they resisted or tried to leave these situations.

With the help of the Pastoral Land Commission, an anti-exploitation organization affiliated with the Catholic Church, Ms. Lopes Loyola approached officials in Brasília to denounce the awful conditions she had seen firsthand. She wrote letters to three former Brazilian presidents: Fernando Collor, Itamar Franco, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Officials and lawmakers were reluctant to believe her; some discredited her testimonies, citing a lack of evidence. With incredible determination, and armed with a camera and an audio recorder, Ms. Lopes Loyola returned to the farms, thoroughly documented the exploitation, and through her persistent advocacy spurred a national movement and a critical shift in the public's understanding of forced labor.

MECH DARA

CAMBODIA

Mech Dara is a Cambodian journalist covering politics, human trafficking, social justice, and human rights. He previously worked at Voice of Democracy before Cambodian authorities revoked its media license in February 2023. Mr. Dara has since used social media platforms to continue to share news content, including sharing information about human trafficking and exploitation in Cambodia.

Mr. Dara's reporting on increased incidents of human trafficking in Cambodia connected to global cyber scams were some of the first in-depth investigative pieces on the subject, bringing international attention and improvements in the Cambodian government's anti-trafficking response. His reporting has appeared in several international news outlets including Al Jazeera, South China Morning Post, and Nikkei Asia.

IMAN ALI ABDULABBAS AL-SAILAWI AND BASIM AL-AMRI

IRAQ

Iman Ali Abdulabbas Al-Sailawi and Basim al-Amri have worked together to combat human trafficking in Iraq since 2003, when they began providing support services and shelter to migrant workers stranded due to military operations, a lack of public security, and sectarian violence. They subsequently broadened their work to cover child labor and forced child labor. Mrs. Iman and Mr. Basim officially registered their anti-trafficking organization, "Fate" (Masser in Arabic), in 2014.

Despite bureaucratic obstacles that for years delayed their organization's official registration and ability to operate its shelter, Mrs. Iman and Mr. Basim forged ahead, aiming to release and support as many individuals as possible. As circumstances evolved, they adapted, continuing their self-funded work, and again expanded their work to help free people enslaved by ISIS and raising public awareness that religion did not sanction or excuse such acts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they secured the release and repatriation of dozens of migrant domestic workers who were abused, exploited, and stranded in Iraq without resources or documents, including 27 Bhutanese women whose employer had not paid them for a year. In all, Mrs. Iman and Mr. Basim have identified and provided support and services to several hundred victims of human trafficking from dozens of countries at their shelter, while directing thousands more to the right services.

Fate's consistent advocacy for increased action against trafficking in persons and increased support services have made Mrs. Iman and Mr. Basim targets of criticism and threats. Fate remains the only Iraqi NGO exclusively dedicated to fighting and ending human trafficking. It has expanded its activities to training officials and practitioners interacting with trafficking victims and engaging lawmakers on anti-trafficking legislation. It also publishes an annual report on human trafficking in Iraq.

ZAHEER AHMED

PAKISTAN

Zaheer Ahmed is a Deputy Inspector General in Pakistan's Police Service, and previously served as Director of the Federal Investigative Agency's (FIA) Anti-Human Smuggling Unit. Mr. Ahmed was instrumental in increasing Pakistan's efforts to combat human trafficking during his time as Director of this unit. The FIA significantly expanded its cooperation with various stakeholders, strategic planning, and information sharing on anti-trafficking efforts, resulting in a significant increase in arrests and prosecutions of traffickers.

Through the tireless efforts of his Anti-Human Smuggling Unit, Mr. Ahmed helped drive the modernization of Pakistan's anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling laws and the formulation and implementation of a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. His team's efforts laid the groundwork for the Federal Cabinet's approval in 2021 of bylaws to the 2018 laws on human trafficking and migrant smuggling. This important work contributed to the effective implementation of the groundbreaking legislation. He leveraged his engagement across Pakistan's federal and provincial bureaucracies to lobby successfully for Pakistan's ratification of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, which Pakistan acceded to in November 2022. Mr. Ahmed significantly improved coordination and cooperation between law enforcement and civil society organizations, which enhanced understanding and support for trafficking victims. Ahmed was also instrumental in developing data collection mechanisms and analysis of trafficking in persons data from all stakeholders.

Through his sustained efforts to collaborate with civil society and international organizations, Mr. Ahmed has shown the importance of working with various stakeholders when investing resources in anti-trafficking policies and programs, as well as the impressive results that can be generated by law enforcement stakeholders' dedication to combating trafficking in persons.

PAOLA HITTSCHER

PERU

Paola Hittscher is a provincial prosecutor in Peru's Public Prosecutor Office, specializing in human trafficking crimes in the Loreto region. Ms. Hittscher has been a key figure in the fight against human trafficking in Loreto since 2016, and a crucial actor in the design, planning, and implementation of the U.S.-Peru Child Protection Compact Partnership. Earlier, Ms. Hittscher worked as a criminal prosecutor in Iquitos.

Ms. Hittscher is renowned for her collaboration and cooperation with the Peruvian Navy, Peruvian National Police, Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, and civil society. Despite limited funding and minimal staff, she has made significant strides to advance investigations and seek prosecutions of human trafficking cases. Facing a shrinking budget, she has often had to use her own vehicles and money to ensure proper support for trafficking victims.

Ms. Hittscher has taken steps to help child trafficking victims feel at ease as they go through police interviews. She raised funds to provide needed support for these children and furnish an office space with comfortable furniture, so children are more at ease during interviews with police and in a supportive and attentive environment.

Ms. Hittscher has faced down major security concerns. The Peruvian government has a limited presence in the Loreto region, and migrant smuggling and human trafficking are rampant. She regularly travels into the jungle with police officers to conduct operations, despite knowing the potential for gunfire, injury, and even loss of life. She endures indirect and direct threats to her life and still perseveres, and in spite of the risks, drives remarkable progress.

EUMELIS MOYA GOITTE
VENEZUELA

Eumelis Moya Goitte is the coordinator of the Office of Human Rights of Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) Guayana. In this role, she investigates human trafficking in Bolivar state, with a special focus on the Orinoco Mining Arc—a strategic development zone in Venezuela. She has drawn international attention to human trafficking crimes in the mining sector and provided support for international efforts to prevent human trafficking of vulnerable populations.

Ms. Moya graduated as a lawyer from the UCAB Guayana and began working on cases in defense of children and adolescents in the Santa Teresa Community Ombudsman's Office, in the San Félix sector of Ciudad Guayana. She also served as a professor at UCAB Guayana for more than 15 years.

Since starting her current role in 2018, Ms. Moya documents situations that involve the abuse and violation of the human rights of the inhabitants of Bolivar state, particularly hard-to-reach vulnerable groups like Indigenous communities. Ms. Moya has built strong relationships and partnerships in her work and relies on the support of community leaders, Indigenous communities, partner institutions, and the media to collect data.

Additionally, Ms. Moya has carried out research for the Center for Reflection and Social Action's project on Human Rights and the Amazon; supported civil society organization Civilis' project to strengthen civic space; and coordinated for three years the Child Protection Project for the Commission of Human Rights and Citizenship. Her work has previously earned her Runshaw College's Sophie Scholl Award for civic values and citizen commitment.

R. EVON BENSON-IDAHOSA
NIGERIA

R. Evon Benson-Idahosa is a Nigerian native, thought leader, and expert on the intersectionality of human trafficking and the economic empowerment of women in sub-Saharan Africa. She lends her expertise as a strategist, advisor, and consultant to organizations as well as state, national, and international governments.

For almost a decade, Ms. Benson-Idahosa has advocated globally for an end to sex trafficking. Through her NGO, Pathfinders Justice Initiative, she has provided holistic prevention and protection services for more than 3,000 women and girls. In her role as an innovative facilitator and trainer, she has organized numerous high-level national and international conferences, including Nigeria's first ever Gap Analysis on Human Trafficking and unsafe migration. Ms. Benson-Idahosa drafted and contributed to Nigeria's anti-trafficking and election legislation. She has also conducted ground-breaking research on sex trafficking recruiters. Alongside her team, her work has culminated in the production of Nigeria's first national guidelines for recovery service providers, law enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors on human trafficking; the creation of www.HERSAfrica.com, the continent's first one stop online hub of resources for survivors; and Edo State's Coordinated Care Mechanism, Nigeria's first state referral mechanism for local service providers.

As an activist, published writer, and speaker, she has been nationally and internationally recognized for her efforts to end violence against women, combat human trafficking, and in generating structural transformation of both the narrative of and the economic landscape for African women.

VENEZUELA—EGYPT

Kali grew up in Venezuela with her mother and two younger brothers. She was completing an engineering degree before her university closed due to the crisis in Venezuela. At a family party, she learned of an au pair opportunity offered through an online international hiring company, which promised to pay for the employee's travel, housing, food, and salary. Kali worked with the company to find a job and finally accepted a position with a wealthy family in Egypt that the hiring company claimed to have verified. Upon arrival, she was taken to a mansion where the employer confiscated her passport and forced her to live in the property's basement with seven other women. They held her and the women captive and forced them to work 18-hour days cleaning and providing childcare for no pay. One day while dropping off her employer's son at school, Kali met a woman who spoke Spanish. The woman introduced her to a group of Venezuelan women who agreed to help her escape. The women informed the Venezuelan embassy of Kali's domestic servitude. After three months of planning, Kali escaped. She now lives in Panama.

TIER PLACEMENTS AND REGIONAL MAPS

TIER 1

ARGENTINA
AUSTRALIA
AUSTRIA
BAHAMAS, THE
BAHRAIN
BELGIUM
CANADA
CHILE
COLOMBIA
CYPRUS
CZECH REPUBLIC (CZECHIA)
DENMARK
ESTONIA
FINLAND
FRANCE
GEORGIA
GERMANY
GUYANA
ICELAND
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBOURG
NETHERLANDS
PHILIPPINES
SEYCHELLES
SINGAPORE
SPAIN
SWEDEN
TAIWAN
UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TIER 2

ALBANIA
ANGOLA
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
ARMENIA
ARUBA
AZERBAIJAN
BANGLADESH
BARBADOS
BELIZE
BENIN
BHUTAN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BRAZIL
BURKINA FASO
BURUNDI
CABO VERDE
CAMEROON
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
COMOROS
CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE
COSTA RICA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
CROATIA
ECUADOR
ETHIOPIA
FIJI
GAMBIA, THE
GHANA
GREECE
GUATEMALA
GUINEA
HONDURAS
HONG KONG S.A.R.
HUNGARY
INDIA
INDONESIA
IRELAND
ISRAEL
ITALY
JAMAICA
JAPAN
JORDAN
KAZAKHSTAN
KENYA
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF
KOSOVO
KYRGYZSTAN
LAOS
LATVIA
LESOTHO
LIBERIA
MALAWI
MALDIVES
MALI
MALTA
MAURITANIA
MEXICO
MICRONESIA, FEDERATED STATES OF
MOLDOVA
MONGOLIA
MOROCCO
NAMIBIA
NEPAL
NEW ZEALAND
NIGER
NIGERIA
NORTH MACEDONIA
NORWAY
OMAN
PAKISTAN
PALAU
PANAMA
PARAGUAY
PERU
POLAND
PORTUGAL
QATAR
ROMANIA
RWANDA
SAINT LUCIA
SAUDI ARABIA
SENEGAL
SIERRA LEONE
SLOVAKIA
SLOVENIA
SRI LANKA
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
SUDAN
SURINAME
SWITZERLAND
TAJIKISTAN
TANZANIA
THAILAND
TIMOR-LESTE
TOGO
TONGA
TUNISIA
TÜRKIYE (TURKEY)
UGANDA
UKRAINE
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
URUGUAY
UZBEKISTAN
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

BOLIVIA
BOTSWANA
BRUNEI
BULGARIA
CONGO, REPUBLIC OF THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
EGYPT
EL SALVADOR
ESWATINI
GABON
HAITI
IRAQ
KUWAIT
LEBANON
MADAGASCAR
MALAYSIA
MARSHALL ISLANDS
MAURITIUS
MONTENEGRO
MOZAMBIQUE
SERBIA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
SOUTH AFRICA
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
VANUATU
VIETNAM

TIER 3

AFGHANISTAN
ALGERIA
BELARUS
BURMA
CAMBODIA
CHAD
CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CUBA
CURAÇAO
DJIBOUTI
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
ERITREA
GUINEA-BISSAU
IRAN
KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
MACAU S.A.R.
NICARAGUA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
RUSSIA
SINT MAARTEN
SOUTH SUDAN
SYRIA
TURKMENISTAN
VENEZUELA

SPECIAL CASE

LIBYA
SOMALIA
YEMEN

TIER PLACEMENTS

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

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	1,293 (54)	1,120 (21)	18,296 (13,205)	4
2017	1,325 (98)	515 (34)	26,517 (5,902)	2
2018	1,253 (37)	1,190 (29)	24,407(3,749)	2
2019	955 (71)	2,122 (32)	42,517 (1,284)	2
2020	1,493 (251)	382 (107)	28,538 (6,947)	8
2021	1,686 (265)	659 (68)	11,450 (3,643)	3
2022	2,477 (388)	904 (139)	21,790 (5,436)	5

The above statistics are estimates derived from data provided by foreign governments and other sources and reviewed by the Department of State. Aggregate data fluctuates from one year to the next due to the hidden nature of trafficking crimes, dynamic global events, shifts in government efforts, and a lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified.

TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1 | TIER 2 | TIER 2 WATCH LIST | TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	2,137 (51)	1,953 (31)	9,989 (310)	7
2017	2,949 (77)	3,227 (72)	4,915 (669)	0
2018	2,351 (63)	1,275 (16)	5,466 (291)	1
2019	3,276 (86)	3,662 (20)	14,132 (7,687)	2
2020	1,838 (70)	1,502 (12)	2,884 (691)	1
2021	1,440 (73)	1,066 (60)	3,348 (859)	0
2022	4,570 (708)	1,607 (63)	4,635 (2037)	3

The above statistics are estimates derived from data provided by foreign governments and other sources and reviewed by the Department of State. Aggregate data fluctuates from one year to the next due to the hidden nature of trafficking crimes, dynamic global events, shifts in government efforts, and a lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified.

TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1 | TIER 2 | TIER 2 WATCH LIST | TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	2,703 (201)	1,673 (40)	13,349 (3,192)	3
2017	2,548 (179)	1,257 (53)	12,750 (3,330)	0
2018	2,394 (234)	1,379 (80)	16,838 (2,675)	1
2019	2,896 (106)	1,346 (41)	17,383 (1,369)	2
2020	2,355 (101)	1,291 (33)	18,173 (1,082)	2
2021	3,285 (86)	1,905 (92)	21,347 (2,124)	5
2022	2,932 (169)	1,668 (67)	24,528 (2,497)	6

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TIER PLACEMENTS

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

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	996 (591)	1,187 (582)	3,292 (185)	4
2017	974 (112)	104 (11)	1,834 (53)	0
2018	738 (10)	155 (7)	2,675 (83)	0
2019	788 (44)	419 (22)	3,619 (35)	0
2020	533 (106)	414 (84)	3,461 (1,827)	0
2021	869 (356)	353 (88)	3,440 (1,127)	1
2022	644 (173)	545 (85)	2,980 (1,790)	0

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SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1 | TIER 2 | TIER 2 WATCH LIST | TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	6,297 (72)	2,193 (19)	14,706 (464)	5
2017	8,105 (264)	1,063 (48)	40,857 (11,813)	2
2018	3,102 (41)	2,465 (9)	24,544 (1,841)	1
2019	2,602 (616)	1,156 (349)	28,929 (3,227)	1
2020	2,747 (532)	834 (74)	45,060 (3,275)	3
2021	1,910(479)	483 (17)	38,426 (12,426)	2
2022	3,304 (1,118)	597 (104)	49,715 (11,161)	1

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TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1 | TIER 2 | TIER 2 WATCH LIST | TIER 3

YEAR	PROSECUTIONS	CONVICTIONS	VICTIMS IDENTIFIED	NEW OR AMENDED LEGISLATION
2016	1,513 (69)	946 (24)	8,821 (109)	2
2017	1,571 (139)	969 (114)	10,011 (2,139)	1
2018	1,252 (72)	1,017 (177)	11,683 (2,370)	0
2019	1,324 (101)	843 (34)	12,352 (273)	0
2020	910 (55)	588 (27)	11,100 (626)	2
2021	1,382 (120)	794 (49)	12,343 (1,040)	4
2022	1,232 (114)	256 (70)	11,676 (1419)	12

The above statistics are estimates derived from data provided by foreign governments and other sources and reviewed by the Department of State. Aggregate data fluctuates from one year to the next due to the hidden nature of trafficking crimes, dynamic global events, shifts in government efforts, and a lack of uniformity in national reporting structures. The numbers in parentheses are those of labor trafficking prosecutions, convictions, and victims identified.

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