
Senegal – Tier 2 2012

Senegal is a source, transit, and destination country for children and women who are subjected to forced labor, forced begging, and sex trafficking. NGOs estimate that more than 50,000 children, most of whom are *talibes*—students attending *daaras* (Koranic schools) run by teachers known as *marabouts*—are forced to beg; in Dakar alone there are approximately 8,000 *talibes* begging in the streets. Senegalese boys and girls are also subjected to domestic servitude, forced labor in gold mines, and exploitation in the sex trade. Trafficking within the country is more prevalent than transnational trafficking, although boys from The Gambia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea have been identified in forced begging and forced labor in artisanal gold mines and agriculture in Senegal. Senegalese women and girls are transported to neighboring countries, Europe, and the Middle East for domestic servitude. NGO observers believe most women and girls exploited in prostitution, however, remain in Senegal. Reports indicate that women were increasingly forced into prostitution in the southeast gold-mining region of Kedougou. Women and girls from other West African countries, particularly Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, may be subjected to domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation in Senegal, including for sex tourism. During the reporting period, six Cambodian men were identified by an international organization as trafficking victims aboard a fishing vessel in Senegal’s territorial waters.

The Government of Senegal does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. During the reporting period, the government demonstrated increased protection efforts by identifying and providing services to a significant number of child victims of trafficking and assisting in the repatriation of victims to Guinea-Bissau. It also provided a modest amount of funding to the anti-trafficking national taskforce, adopted a three-year national action plan, and began a mapping of all *daaras* to address forced begging by *marabouts*. Despite these efforts, the government failed to undertake notable law enforcement efforts, with no prosecutions or convictions during the reporting period and an overall lack of awareness of the anti-trafficking law among law enforcement and judicial personnel. The government also did not identify or provide services to any adult victims.

Recommendations for Senegal: Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses and convict and punish trafficking offenders for subjecting victims to

involuntary servitude and sex trafficking; train police and magistrates to recognize indicators of trafficking; begin proactive victim identification programs, including screening vulnerable populations, such as women in prostitution and children begging in the streets, for indicators of trafficking; expand government-funded shelters or partner with international organizations to establish wider sheltering options for trafficking victims; develop appropriate referral pathways for victim care; expand labor investigations in the informal sector of the economy; and increase funding to the National Task Force for the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking.

Prosecution

The Government of Senegal demonstrated negligible anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts during the reporting period. Senegal's 2005 Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices and to Protect Victims prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes penalties of five to 10 years' imprisonment for violations, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The government did not maintain or publish statistics relating to human trafficking investigations and did not report any prosecutions or convictions for trafficking during the reporting period. The government prosecuted an unknown number of *marabouts* for severely beating *talibes* who they exploited through forced begging; however, these *marabouts* were only prosecuted for child abuse crimes and were allowed to continue to engage in forced begging. In December 2012, the National Taskforce Against Trafficking Especially of Women and Children (National Taskforce), the government's designated coordinating body for anti-trafficking efforts, co-hosted with UNODC a two-day workshop to familiarize 50 magistrates with the 2005 anti-trafficking law. Many law enforcement and judicial personnel remained unaware of the anti-trafficking law's existence and may have used other statutes to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases; this lack of awareness continued to hinder efforts to collect data on human trafficking law enforcement efforts. The government did not report any investigations or prosecutions of public officials for alleged complicity in trafficking-related offenses during the reporting period.

Protection

The Government of Senegal made increased efforts to identify trafficking victims and provide them with protective services during the year, in contrast to 2011, when it failed to formally identify any victims of trafficking. The government identified and offered services to at least 110 child trafficking victims, including 72 from Senegal, 31 from Guinea Bissau, and seven from The Gambia, the majority of whom were victims of forced begging; of the Bissau-Guinean victims, 17 were returned to their families during the reporting period. The Ginndi Center, the only

government-run shelter in Senegal, provided protective services to all 110 victims; the government appropriated the equivalent of approximately \$100,000 to the center in 2012 to provide child victims with shelter, food, medical and psychological care, family mediation and reconciliation services, and limited education and vocational training. Despite this funding, the center remained underfunded and lacking the resources to adequately pay its staff or provide any specialized training for the social workers who counsel street children and victims of trafficking. During the year, the Ginndi Center's child protection hotline received 7,200 calls concerning children in distress or requesting information; an unknown but reportedly significant number of these calls concerned cases of human trafficking. The government refers trafficking victims to other NGO-run shelters, but does not have a formal referral mechanism in place to facilitate and standardize the process and does not provide funding or other support to such shelters. The government failed to identify any adult victims of trafficking during the reporting period; it collaborated, however, to ensure the repatriation of six Cambodian trafficking victims who were identified by an international organization after being subjected to forced labor aboard a fishing vessel in Senegal's territorial waters. While the government was able to offer legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims who may face retribution or hardship upon returning to their home countries, including the option to apply for temporary or permanent residency status, it is unclear whether any victims were given this immigration relief during the reporting period. The government did not encourage victims to participate in the investigation or prosecution of their traffickers.

Prevention

The Government of Senegal demonstrated increased efforts to prevent human trafficking during the reporting period. It allocated the equivalent of approximately \$20,000 to the National Taskforce in 2012. Although the taskforce remained significantly underfunded, this funding demonstrated an increase from the previous year, during which the taskforce did not receive any funding and was generally inactive. The National Taskforce, in partnership with UNODC and ILO, held two conferences, one from March, attended by 55 participants, and the other from August, attended by 50 participants; both conferences were attended by members of the taskforce, in addition to representatives from government ministries and various NGOs and civil society groups. During these conferences, the National Taskforce developed and finalized a three-year national action plan. In October 2012, the National Taskforce also conducted a conference to educate 40 members of the private sector on the risks and indicators of child trafficking. However, approximately 70 percent of Senegal's economy operates in the informal sector

and it is within these businesses that most forced child labor occurs; the Ministry of Labor does not regulate this sector.

In an effort to address the significant issue of forced begging of *talibes* by abusive *marabouts*, the National Taskforce began a mapping project, jointly funded by the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) taskforce and a foreign donor, of all *daaras* in October 2012 to develop a better understanding of trafficking within *daaras*, compile a list of best practices for Koranic education in Senegal, and develop intervention strategies to improve these institutions' educational capability. Despite these initial efforts, exploitation and abuse continues. In early March 2013, a fire in one such *daara* resulted in the death of at least seven *talibe*; following this tragedy, the president and prime minister both made public statements condemning the children's deaths and called on the public to inform authorities of *daaras* that practice forced begging or where children live in unsafe conditions.

The government neither funded any anti-trafficking information or education campaigns nor took any steps to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts during the reporting period. It also failed to provide specific anti-trafficking training to Senegalese troops before their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions, although troops did receive training in general human rights, gender violence, and international rule of law.