

Trafficking in Persons Report 2013 Country Narratives: MOROCCO

Morocco is a source, destination, and transit country for men, women, and children who are subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Some Moroccan girls from rural areas as young as six or seven years old are recruited to work as maids in cities and often experience conditions of forced labor, such as nonpayment of wages, threats, restrictions on movement, and physical, psychological, or sexual abuse; however, an NGO reports that the incidence of child maids has decreased since 2005, in part due to government-funded programs promoted in primary school, especially in rural areas, and awareness programs funded by UN agencies and NGOs. Some Moroccan boys experience forced labor as apprentices in the artisan and construction industries and in mechanic shops. Men, women, and an increasing number of children primarily from sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia enter Morocco voluntarily but illegally with the assistance of smugglers; once in Morocco, some of the women and older girls are coerced into prostitution or, less frequently, forced into domestic service. International organizations and local NGOs report that unaccompanied children and women from Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria are highly vulnerable to sex trafficking and to a lesser extent forced labor in Morocco. Some women from Cote d'Ivoire, Philippines, and Indonesia are recruited to work as domestic workers in Morocco; some report being subjected to conditions of forced labor, including withheld wages and passports and physical abuse at the hands of their employers. Criminal networks operating in the northern border town of Oujda on the Algerian border commonly force undocumented foreign migrant women into prostitution and begging; these networks also reportedly force children into begging. Some female migrants transiting Oujda, particularly Nigerians, were forced into prostitution once they reached Europe. There is some sex tourism committed by foreigners in major cities in Morocco. Due to conflicts in the region, there has been a small increase in the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in this reporting period, including from Syria and the Central African Republic.

Moroccan men, women, and children are exploited for forced labor and sex trafficking in Europe and the Middle East. Moroccan women are forced into prostitution in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Syria, and European countries; some of them experience restrictions on movement, threats, and emotional and physical abuse. Some Moroccan men reportedly are promised jobs in the Gulf but experience confiscation of their passports and are coerced into debt bondage after arrival. A few Moroccan men and boys are lured to Europe by fraudulent job offers and are subsequently forced to sell drugs.

The Government of Morocco does not comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite these measures, the government did not demonstrate evidence of overall increasing efforts to address human trafficking since the previous reporting period; therefore Morocco is placed on Tier 2 Watch List. The government did not demonstrate progress in investigating, prosecuting, convicting, and adequately punishing trafficking offenders and failed to provide law enforcement data. It did not show progress in proactively identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable groups, especially the sub-Saharan migrant community, nor did it ensure that foreign trafficking victims were not subject to arrest and deportation. The government

made some efforts, however, to offer protective services to Moroccan women and child victims of trafficking. The government continued to lack adequate anti-trafficking legislation.

Recommendations for Morocco: Complete the drafting and enactment of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation that prohibits all forms of trafficking and increases prescribed penalties for forced labor; significantly increase investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking offenders with sufficiently stringent penalties for all forms of trafficking; institute a victim identification and referral mechanism to guide officials in the identification and assistance of trafficking victims; provide additional funds to NGOs providing specialized services for human trafficking victims; ensure that identified victims are not punished for acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking, such as immigration violations or physical abuse by police; encourage victims to participate in investigations against their traffickers, including by offering relief from deportation; significantly improve data collection and reporting, including the disaggregation of data between human trafficking and human smuggling; and conduct public awareness campaigns addressing all forms of trafficking and encompassing child sex tourism.

Prosecution

The government made little progress in its law enforcement response to human trafficking during the reporting period. Morocco lacks a single comprehensive anti-trafficking law, which remained a serious obstacle to successfully prosecuting human trafficking and contributed to confusion among officials in differentiating human smuggling and human trafficking. Morocco's penal code prohibits forced child labor through Article 467-2, which prescribes punishment of one to three years' imprisonment. The penal code also prohibits forced prostitution and child prostitution through articles 497-499, which prescribe punishment of up to 10 years' or life imprisonment if found to have occurred with aggravated circumstances. Penalties prescribed by these various statutes for sex trafficking offenses are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. In contrast, penalties prescribed for labor trafficking offenses do not appear to be sufficiently stringent. Article 10 of Morocco's labor code prohibits forced labor of a worker; this offense is punishable by a fine for the first offense and a jail term of up to three months in subsequent offences. Penalties for coerced child labor under Article 467 range from one to three years' imprisonment.

At the end of the reporting period, the government did not report data on investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of sex and labor trafficking offenders. The government has not developed an effective system to collect anti-trafficking law enforcement data, which continued to prevent the government from being able to report trafficking statistics in a timely manner. NGOs and the media reported that a woman was convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in 2012 for beating her child maid to death; however, the details of this case were unavailable. The media also reported that an unspecified number of Filipina domestic workers, some of whom may be trafficking victims, filed lawsuits against their former employers for abusive conditions indicative of forced labor, including physical abuse and confiscated passports.

The government continued to provide and fund a variety of trafficking training events to law enforcement and judicial officials in 2012. In November and December 2012, the Ministry of Justice in collaboration with UNHCR provided anti-trafficking and victim identification training for judges, judicial police officers, gendarmes, and representatives of civil society. The Ministry of Interior also reported that security officials received trafficking awareness training at the Training Institute for Auxiliary Forces.

Protection

The Moroccan government demonstrated minimal efforts to protect victims of trafficking over the past year. It did not develop or employ systematic procedures to proactively identify victims of trafficking, and it continued to show weak efforts in identifying victims of all forms of trafficking. The government was also limited in its ability to provide sufficient staffing and funding resources to protect victims of human trafficking. The government did not provide long-term shelter or housing benefits or other protection services to victims of trafficking. Some local and international NGOs, however, reported having an active working relationship with local law enforcement officials, who reportedly referred cases of at-risk children, some of whom may be trafficking victims, to local NGOs for assistance. The government did not provide official statistics on the number of identified victims of trafficking; however, an international NGO reported assisting 36 victims of trafficking in 2012. The Ministry of Employment and Professional Development (MOEPT) employed 463 labor inspectors for the entire country, and 51 of which were designated to child labor cases. The inspectors were hindered by inadequate staffing and did not have the legal authority to enter homes, preventing them from investigating and identifying instances of child labor or trafficking in domestic service situations. The government continued to protect child victims of violence found within the country, some of whom may be victims of trafficking, through its 75 children reception centers and five child protection centers for child victims; however, these centers often lacked adequate personnel, and it is unknown how many of the child victims receiving services at these centers were trafficking victims. The government reportedly provided assistance to Moroccan trafficking victims overseas with travel documents and transportation home; however, the government was unable to provide statistics for the number of victims assisted during the reporting period. The government lacked a policy to protect trafficking victims from being prosecuted for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Anecdotal information from NGOs suggested that authorities arrested, detained, and deported some foreign trafficking victims during the year. Undocumented migrants who arrived from Algeria, some of whom may be trafficking victims, were usually deported back to the Algerian border, reportedly often without food or water, and were susceptible to being robbed, assaulted, and sexually abused by criminal gangs operating in the area. During this reporting period, local media outlets and NGOs reported that government authorities conducted mass raids and arrests of sub-Saharan migrants in Oujda, expelling 5,400 irregular migrants into Algeria. There was no evidence to suggest that authorities made efforts to identify potential trafficking victims among those who were arrested and deported.

The government did not report whether it encouraged victims to participate in investigations against trafficking offenders. The government did not offer legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims of trafficking to countries where they might face retribution or hardship. Sub-Saharan African women

who were forced into prostitution in Morocco were unlikely to report crimes for fear of being treated as undocumented migrants and deported, though in reality, undocumented migrant women were rarely deported. Undocumented migrants were also allowed access to basic medical care at public health institutions.

Prevention

The Moroccan government made minimal efforts to prevent human trafficking over the last year. The government did not undertake campaigns to raise public awareness about human trafficking. Most child labor prevention programs focused on poverty reduction and providing financial support and education to targeted families to ensure that children stay in school. In 2012, the MOEPT continued to allocate the equivalent of approximately \$187,500 to nine Moroccan NGOs focusing on child labor issues, and the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development provided the equivalent of approximately \$2 million to NGOs focusing on women and child welfare. Two government-operated child protection units, an emergency telephone hotline, a mobile assistance program, and women and children focal points continued to assist vulnerable women and children in major cities in Morocco. An inter-ministerial committee on coordination for trafficking issues comprised of representatives from multiple ministries met occasionally during the reporting period. Authorities made no discernible efforts to raise public awareness of child prostitution or sex trafficking of women and did not take any reported measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or child sex tourism, though media outlets reported several instances of alleged sexual tourism during the reporting period and the topic of child sexual exploitation became more widely discussed in the media and within the government during the reporting period. The government provided training on the issue of sexual exploitation to Moroccan soldiers prior to their deployment abroad on UN peacekeeping missions.

Full Report: <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/index.htm>