
TOGO – Tier 2

Togo is a source and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. The majority of Togolese victims are exploited within the country. Forced child labor occurs in the agricultural sector—particularly on coffee, cocoa, and cotton farms—as well as in stone and sand quarries. Children from rural areas are brought to the capital, Lome, and forced to work as domestic servants, roadside vendors, and porters, or exploited in prostitution. The western border of the Plateau region, which provides easy access to major roads leading to Accra, Ghana and Lome, was a primary source for trafficking victims during the reporting period. Near the Togo-Burkina Faso border, some religious teachers, known as *marabouts*, forced Togolese boys into begging. Children from Benin and Ghana are recruited and transported to Togo for forced labor. Togolese girls and, to a lesser extent, boys are transported to Benin, Gabon, Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and forced to work in agriculture. Traffickers exploit Togolese men for forced labor in agriculture and Togolese women as domestic servants in Nigeria. Togolese women are fraudulently recruited for employment in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the United States, and Europe, where they are subsequently subjected to domestic servitude or forced prostitution.

The Government of Togo does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government reported increased numbers of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers for child trafficking crimes in 2014 compared to the previous reporting period. It also increased by five the number of labor inspectors. The government identified 711 potential trafficking victims; however, it is unknown whether it provided services to these victims. The government did not demonstrate any tangible efforts to address trafficking of adults—failing to report any efforts to investigate such cases, identify or assist adult victims, or enact draft legislation to prohibit this form of the crime for the eighth year in a row.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOGO:

Enact draft legislation prohibiting the forced labor and forced prostitution of adults; increase efforts to prosecute and punish trafficking offenders, to include using existing statutes to prosecute trafficking crimes committed against adults; develop a formal system to proactively identify trafficking victims, including adults, and train law enforcement, immigration, and social welfare officials on such procedures; effectively track the number of trafficking victims who receive services from the government, are referred to NGOs, or are returned to their families; develop a system among law enforcement and judicial officials to track suspected human trafficking cases and prosecution data; allocate sufficient funds to operate the Tokoin and Oasis centers; and increase efforts to raise public awareness about the dangers of human trafficking, including the trafficking of adults.

PROSECUTION

The government increased law enforcement efforts against child trafficking, but did not demonstrate tangible efforts to address trafficking of adults. Togolese law does not prohibit all forms of trafficking or criminalize the sex trafficking of adults. Article 4 of the 2006 labor code prohibits forced and compulsory labor, though its prescribed penalties of three to six months' imprisonment are not sufficiently stringent, and its definition of forced or compulsory labor includes some exceptions that constitute trafficking. The 2007 child code prohibits all forms of child trafficking and prescribes penalties of two to five years' imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent, but not commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The 2005 Law Related to Child Smuggling prescribes prison sentences of three months' to 10 years' imprisonment for abducting, transporting, or receiving children for the purposes of exploitation. Despite eight years of the *TIP Report* recommending the enactment of legislation criminalizing the trafficking of adults, the government did not take action during the reporting period to enact its draft legislation, which has remained pending since 2009.

The government reported 103 investigations, 76 prosecutions, and 54 convictions of trafficking offenders; an increase from the 85 investigations, 62 prosecutions

and 40 convictions in 2013. It is unclear how many of these cases actually involved trafficking charges, as the government was unable to provide the details of these cases. The government did not provide any trafficking-specific training to its law enforcement officials. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in human trafficking offenses. Experts reported judges were often reluctant to convict or fine parents who trafficked their children as they felt it would exacerbate the economic situation that drove a parent to commit the crime.

PROTECTION

The government sustained efforts to provide modest protection to child trafficking victims. In 2014, the government reported its identification of 712 potential victims of child trafficking, including 351 boys and 361 girls, compared with 580 identified in 2013; the majority of these children were intercepted and rescued prior to reaching their destinations, where they would have likely faced exploitation, typically as farm laborers or domestic servants. The government did not report the number of children referred to care facilities. Of the victims, 281 originated from Anie, a prefecture in the Plateaux Region. The government did not identify any adult victims of trafficking.

In Lome, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) continued to run a toll-free 24-hour helpline, *Allo 10-11*, which received an unknown number of calls regarding child trafficking and other forms of child abuse. The National Committee for the Reception and Social Reinsertion of Trafficked Children (CNARSEVT), Togo's national anti-trafficking committee comprised of government officials and NGOs, continued to operate jointly with the police an *ad hoc* referral system to respond to hotline tips. The MSA continued to operate two shelters; the Tokoin Community Center served as an intermediary shelter for child victims before transfer to care facilities managed by NGOs, while the Oasis Center provided shelter, legal, medical, and social services to child victims up to age 14. The government was unable to provide the total budget for victim assistance and protection.

CNARSEVT does not have procedures in place to facilitate the return and reintegration of Togolese nationals in a systematic fashion. The government did not offer temporary or permanent residency status to foreign victims facing

hardship or retribution upon return to their country of origin. The government does not have a formal process in place to encourage victims to participate in the investigation and prosecution of their traffickers, and it is unclear whether any victims did so during the reporting period. There were no reports of child victims being penalized for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked; the government does not consider adults as trafficking victims and, therefore, some unidentified adult victims may have been penalized for such crimes.

PREVENTION

The government sustained minimal efforts to prevent child trafficking during the year and showed no discernible efforts to prevent adult trafficking. The government employed 86 labor inspectors in the five regions of Togo during the reporting period, an increase of five inspectors from the previous year. The government reduced the demand for forced labor by outlawing and closing unlicensed sand and rock quarries, which commonly exploit children for forced labor. Additionally, the MSA initiated a program to partner with 30 traditional religious leaders to eliminate the practice of religious “apprenticeships”—a practice in which children are entrusted to religious leaders and are subsequently exploited in forced begging, forced domestic work, or sexual slavery when parents are unable to pay school fees. Although the government released a report on commercial child sexual exploitation in Togo in 2013, it did not take any discernible measures to decrease the demand for commercial sex acts. The government provided anti-trafficking training to Togolese troops prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions. The government did not provide anti-trafficking training or guidance for its diplomatic personnel.