

YEMEN (TIER 2)

Yemen is a country of origin for internationally trafficked children, and reportedly a destination for foreign women trafficked into Yemen for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Yemeni children, primarily boys, are trafficked to Saudi Arabia for exploitation as beggars, street vendors, and unskilled laborers. Some Iraqi women are reportedly trafficked into Yemen for the purpose of sexual exploitation. There were some reports of Yemeni women and underage girls being trafficked internally from rural areas to cities for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Trafficking in persons is a new issue in Yemen, and the government has few resources to devote to combating trafficking. Nevertheless, in 2004 it made positive progress, including working with UNICEF to produce a report that assesses child trafficking and utilizing a new entry visa requirement for Iraqis traveling into Yemen. Yemen should build on these positive achievements by taking similar steps against trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and appointing a national coordinator to oversee its overall anti-trafficking efforts, including the development of a national plan of action against trafficking.

Prosecution

The Government of Yemen made some efforts to prosecute trafficking cases during the reporting period. Yemen does not have an anti-trafficking law; however, it has provisions in its criminal code to prosecute and punish traffickers. It investigated 12 trafficking cases, prosecuted two alleged traffickers, and produced one trafficking-related conviction over the last year. Yemeni security forces interdicted and curtailed several child trafficking attempts and conducted sweeps in Sanaa and Aden. As a result of the sweeps, the government deported several foreign women in prostitution, though they may have been trafficking victims. Yemen should craft and implement a screening procedure to identify trafficking victims.

Protection

The Government of Yemen provided limited assistance to trafficking victims over the reporting period. It trained some police officers on techniques to recognize and properly handle trafficking cases. It rescued and returned child victims to their families and repatriated women suspected of involvement in prostitution, some of whom may have been trafficking victims. It worked closely with UNICEF to establish a reception center for trafficked children in the Harath region, and operated four additional centers in the north. There were reports that some child victims were arrested and possibly abused while in the government's custody. If true, authorities should take steps to investigate the incidents, prosecute offenders, and prevent future abuses. The government should build on existing programs that attempt to prevent the re-trafficking of repatriated or rescued child victims.

Prevention

During the reporting period, the Government of Yemen took positive steps to prevent trafficking, including conducting, together with UNICEF, a study on the problem of child trafficking; hosting a high-profile two-day conference to highlight the study's findings; instituting an entry visa requirement for Iraqis to prevent the trafficking of Iraqi women into Yemen; increasing the monitoring of its border with Saudi Arabia and agreeing with Saudi Arabia to establish a bilateral committee to combat child trafficking; sponsoring limited anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns; and conducting anti-trafficking training for its security officials.