



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

JUNE 2019





MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE



Dear Reader:

Human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes on Earth. Right now traffickers are robbing a staggering 24.9 million people of their freedom and basic human dignity—that’s roughly three times the population of New York City. We must band together and build momentum to defeat human trafficking. We must hold the perpetrators of this heinous crime accountable. We must achieve justice for survivors as they rebuild their lives. We must reinvigorate our shared commitment to extinguish human trafficking wherever it exists. There is no time to waste.

Achieving these objectives requires sound information and tried-and-true approaches. Through the annual Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report), we assess comprehensively what governments around the world are doing to combat this crime. The TIP Report is an invaluable tool to arm ourselves with the latest information and guide our action at home and abroad. It helps us go beyond preconceived notions of what we think human trafficking is and better understand the complexities of this crime.

Each one of us can be a champion for freedom and use our specific strengths to help eradicate human trafficking. Individuals can learn the common indicators for human trafficking and call in suspicious activities to the local or national hotline. Businesses can take meaningful steps to eliminate forced labor from their supply chains. First responders can enhance training and put in place screening to help identify trafficking victims. Government leaders can prioritize investigating and prosecuting labor and sex trafficking cases wherever they occur.

Alongside us in the battle are those who sadly know first-hand how depraved this assault on human dignity really is. We salute the brave survivors who have already become instrumental partners in the global fight to combat human trafficking. We encourage other governments to seek survivor input and apply trauma-informed approaches to hold traffickers accountable and care for survivors. And we honor the courageous TIP Report Heroes who have dedicated themselves to this most urgent cause of defending freedom.

The Department of State joins the Trump Administration, community leaders, global allies, and the survivors in our shared fight to end human trafficking. We must be resolute—we cannot leave anyone behind. Rather, we must harness innovation and ingenuity to prevent trafficking, identify and empower those who have survived it, and send the strongest message possible to traffickers that we will not tolerate their despicable and criminal acts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Pompeo".

Under the Palermo Protocol, “trafficking in persons” is defined as:

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

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“If we want to succeed in confronting human trafficking in all its manifestations, we must better understand its scope and structure.”

– Yuri Fedotov
Executive Director, UNODC

school and receive wages for their work, thereby enabling them to send money home.

- In **India**, the government officially abolished bonded labor in 1976, but the system of forced labor still exists. For example, under one scheme prevalent in granite quarries in India, quarry owners offer wage advances or loans with exorbitant interest rates, trapping workers in debt bondage—in some cases for their entire lives.
- In the **United Kingdom (UK)**, gangs force British children to carry drugs. According to the UK National Crime Agency data in 2017, the largest group of potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism was UK nationals.
- In the **United States**, traffickers prey upon children in the foster care system. Recent reports have consistently indicated that a large number of victims of child sex trafficking were at one time in the foster care system.
- In **Yemen**, the ongoing conflict has led to many human rights violations, with many parties using child soldiers. According to a UN report, there have been 842 verified cases of the recruitment and use of boys as young as 11 years old.

Given the recent global estimates related to the national nature of human trafficking and the various forms it can take, all governments must acknowledge and take targeted steps to address human trafficking that takes place within one country without any movement across an international border.

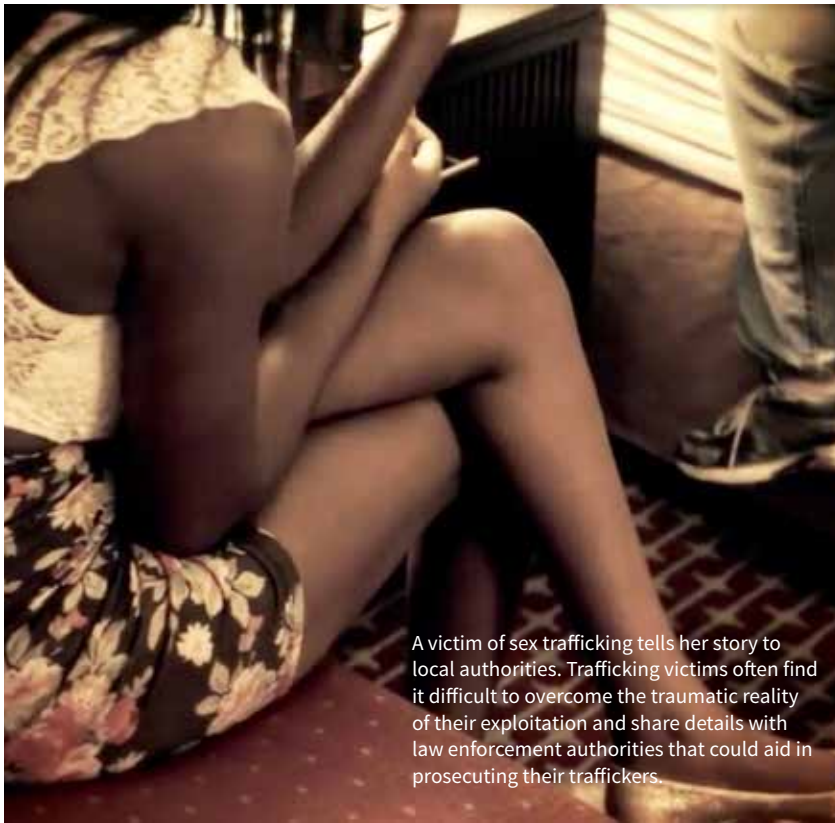
There may be complicated reasons why a government would fail to address this form of human trafficking. It is easier to look outward and call on other governments to act; it takes much more resolution and political will for governments to look inward and stop traffickers, including their own citizens, from exploiting victims who have not crossed an international border. Governments should also examine the varying political and economic systems that make it easier for traffickers to commit the crime. What is clear is that governments have an obligation to address all forms of human trafficking, those both with and without a transnational element. When governments overlook this reality and ignore human trafficking at home, they risk being blinded to—and neglecting—an often significant crime within their own borders.

THE PALERMO PROTOCOL AND TRANSNATIONALITY

In 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), marked an important transition into the modern movement against human trafficking. Over the years, the Palermo Protocol has been the source of much clarification—but also some confusion—about human trafficking, particularly regarding the issue of transnationality.

It was the first international instrument to define “trafficking in persons” and provide insight into the many different ways traffickers commit this crime. The Palermo Protocol uses “trafficking in persons” as an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of offenses, such as maintaining someone in forced labor or recruiting someone for compelled commercial sexual exploitation. It also provided a much-needed foundation on which governments could build policies that criminalize human trafficking and stop traffickers, protect victims and prevent victimization, and promote cooperation among countries.

HONDURAS UNITED STATES



A victim of sex trafficking tells her story to local authorities. Trafficking victims often find it difficult to overcome the traumatic reality of their exploitation and share details with law enforcement authorities that could aid in prosecuting their traffickers.

At 14, Miguel had already worked for years trying to support his family in Honduras. One night, after leaving his job at a local restaurant, two men abducted him, drugged him, and took him to the United States. Once there, they sold him to traffickers who plied him with more drugs and forced him into child sex trafficking where he endured daily sexual assault and threats of harm to his family back in Honduras. Federal law enforcement authorities eventually found Miguel during an operation; however, Miguel experienced further traumatization, bullying, and discrimination after he entered the state foster care system.

Even foreign children are abused in the US Foster system