

Stop Trafficking!

Awareness Advocacy Action

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FOCUS: This month's newsletter highlights excerpts from the 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report.

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is the United States government's principal diplomatic and diagnostic tool to guide relations with foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world's most comprehensive resource for governmental anti-trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. government's commitment to global leadership on this critical human rights issue. As the Trafficking Victims Protection Act requires, the TIP Report assesses government efforts worldwide to combat human trafficking and highlights strategies to address this crime and protect the victims. This year's Report, the 22nd installment, includes narratives for 188 countries and territories, including the United States.

Released on July 19, 2022, the Report illuminates the impact of human trafficking on our global community. It highlights the incredible strides and achievements of survivor leaders and individuals with lived experience of human trafficking, including their role as valued anti-trafficking experts. They run organizations, advocate before legislatures, train law enforcement officers, conduct public outreach, and collaborate with government officials on local and national levels. In addition, they serve the anti-trafficking community and society at large as doctors, lawyers, mental health professionals, and more. Engaging survivors as partners is critical to establishing effective victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent anti-trafficking policies and strategies that address prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts.

Survivor leaders continue to act to end human trafficking that reflects the realities and needs of those most vulnerable to trafficking. During the release of the Report, Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State, identified 34 country governments that are partnering with survivor leaders in combating human trafficking in their respective countries. Including survivor leaders will help prevent sensationalism and reduce the potential re-traumatization of survivors. It will also promote more effective criminal justice responses that provide remedies for victims and survivors and help prevent trafficking crimes.

As the anti-trafficking field grew, survivors were called on to share stories of their trafficking experience.

They faced barriers and competition to participate as legitimate partners or experts in anti-trafficking policy and programming efforts.

The long-standing trend of engaging survivors solely to share their trafficking experience is not always an appropriate or meaningful way to engage survivors. Storytelling can be a powerful tool to shed light on the reality of human trafficking; however, it can easily cause survivors to relive the trauma they experienced. It can also be harmful if survivors' stories are used without their consent, or a survivor feels compelled to accept a paid speaking request to share their story because of their economic situation.

Many survivors have overcome real and serious challenges and made remarkable strides forward, such as pursuing advanced degrees and founding NGOs that advance anti-trafficking priorities. In response to survivors' advocacy efforts, the global anti-trafficking community has taken tangible steps toward more meaningful survivor engagement. Governments, anti-trafficking organizations, and private sector entities are now developing strategies and creating opportunities to build more meaningful working relationships with survivors. Recently enacted U.S. legislation has explicitly recognized the necessity of survivor engagement. Recent examples include informing the development of human trafficking training requirements for health care and social service providers; improving detection of human trafficking-related financial transactions when surveilling money laundering and counter-terrorist financing activities; and enhancing efforts to combat human trafficking affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Models of Survivor Engagement

There are several ways that governments and organizations are engaging survivor leaders to participate in their planning and work to end human trafficking, including the models listed below:

Advisory Councils and Boards

In 2015, the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act passed as part of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act established the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. This idea of survivor leaders was the world's first survivor engagement mechanism of its kind. It created a formal platform for human trafficking survivors to provide input on federal policies and marked a significant breakthrough in the anti-trafficking movement.

The Council advises and makes recommendations on federal anti-trafficking policies to the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, a cabinet-level entity created by the TVPA, which consists of 20 agencies across the federal government responsible for coordinating U.S. government-wide efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Each member of the Council is a survivor of human trafficking, and together they represent a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. The President appoints members of the Council for two-year terms.

Since it was established, the Council has produced five reports containing recommendations for the U.S. government related to the rule of law, public awareness, victim services, labor laws, grantmaking, survivor-informed leadership, and underserved populations. Since 2021, members of this Council are compensated for their work.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also created the Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA), which seeks to develop and expand survivor-informed services, offering leadership development opportunities to survivor leaders and allied professionals. The first class of HTLA fellows informed the "Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations."

Internationally, governments have consulted with survivor leaders to improve their anti-trafficking efforts. The International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC) was established in 2021. The Council consists of 21 survivor leaders from the 57 member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Council provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and through ODIHR to the OSCE participating States on matters about combating human trafficking.

The ISTAC also guides survivor leaders on the tools necessary to foster the growth of national and international survivor networks and promotes the standardization of survivor-related terminology within anti-trafficking frameworks. Members are compensated for specific ISTAC-related work, including participation in trainings and speaking engagements.

The Coalition of Shelters for Victims of Trafficking in Albania has an Advisory Board for Victims of Trafficking composed of survivors of trafficking, with its Regulation and Code of Conduct. The Board advises shelters on addressing the specific needs of victims concerning identification, protection, and support and on consistently improving the shelters' policies and practices.

The Government of Canada has committed to establishing a Survivor Advisory Committee comprising survivors of human trafficking to provide a platform in which individuals with lived experiences can inform and provide their unique and invaluable recommendations to the Government of Canada on current and future federal anti-human trafficking policies and initiatives.

The Governments of the Philippines and the United Kingdom sought survivor input to inform the provision of protection services. The Government of the United Kingdom engaged directly with survivors to better understand their recovery needs. In the Philippines, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking conducted virtual focus group discussions with trafficking survivors to seek feedback on protection services, case management, and challenges in providing services.

The Governments of Guyana, Rwanda, and the Netherlands have consulted survivors on updates to their respective national action plans—critical to informing future whole of government approaches to address human trafficking. The Organization of American States acknowledged the importance of survivor engagement in developing national policies and programs. In addition, governments in Armenia, the Dominican Republic, India, and Spain sought survivor input on reforming existing or new draft anti-trafficking laws. Finally, many governments involved survivor leaders in shaping and delivering targeted awareness and outreach efforts, raising their voices to ensure impactful and clear messaging to facilitate change, as was done in Kosovo, Malta, Pakistan, Slovakia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates.

Survivor leaders have established their own organizations and continue working as independent contractors to advise NGOs, government agencies, and international and regional organizations on implementing survivor-informed and trauma-informed approaches in policymaking and service delivery.

Regardless of the model, governments and organizations must ensure the application of a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent approach; provide competitive compensation for survivors' expertise and contributions; and be willing to dedicate resources and explore ways to implement the changes recommended by survivor leaders.

Child Soldiers Prevention Act List

One manifestation of human trafficking occurs when government forces or any non-state armed group unlawfully recruits or uses children — through force, fraud, or coercion — as soldiers or for labor or services in conflict situations.

Children are also used as sex slaves. Sexual slavery, as referred to here, occurs when armed groups force or coerce children to “marry” or be raped by commanders or combatants. Both male and female children are often sexually abused or exploited by members of armed groups and suffer the same types of devastating physical and psychological consequences associated with sex trafficking.

Section 402 of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, as amended (CSPA), requires publication in the annual TIP Report of a list of foreign governments identified during the previous year as having governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces, or government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers, as defined in the CSPA. These determinations cover the reporting period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Governments identified on the list are subject to restrictions, in the following fiscal year, on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment. The determination to include a government in the CSPA list is informed by various sources, including first-hand observation by U.S. government personnel and research and credible reporting from various UN entities, international organizations, local and international NGOs, and international and domestic media outlets.

The 2022 CSPA list includes governments of the following countries:

Afghanistan, Burma, Central African Republic, DRC, Iran, Mali, Russia, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.



State-Sponsored Human Trafficking

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol call on governments to address the crime of human trafficking. However, some governments directly compel their citizens into sexual slavery or forced labor schemes. From forced labor in local or national public work projects, military operations, and economically important sectors, or as part of government-funded projects or missions abroad, officials use their power to exploit their nationals. To extract this work, governments coerce by threatening the withdrawal of public benefits, withholding salaries, failing to adhere to limits on national service, manipulating the lack of legal status of stateless individuals and members of minority groups, threatening to punish family members, or conditioning services or freedom of movement on labor or sex.

The TVPA directly links government involvement in trafficking crimes to a Tier 3 ranking. The 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report includes the following 11 governments with a documented “policy or pattern” of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers: Afghanistan, Burma, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of Russia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan and Yemen.



Advocacy

Six TIP heroes were recognized at the State Department's release of the Report



**Mohammed
Tariqul Islam**
Bangladesh

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO

In recognition of his unyielding determination to provide assistance to victims of human trafficking, improve the investigation and prosecution capacity of the Bangladeshi Government, and increase cross-border collaboration to facilitate repatriation of survivors.

In recognition of his critical role in implementing new ways to cooperate with the Jordanian anti-trafficking community, which led to formalized information sharing within the Public Security Directorate and with prosecutors, as well as a formal agreement with the Civil Aviation Regulatory Authority, to improve anti-trafficking efforts and ensure victims receive vital services.



**Major Mohammad
al-Khlaifat**
Jordan

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO



**Judge Cornelius
Wennah**
Liberia

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO

In recognition of his resolute efforts to build capacity in Liberia's criminal justice sector to successfully prosecute human traffickers and his strong advocacy for the active inclusion of traditional leaders and civil society organizations in Liberia's National Anti-Trafficking Task Force.

In recognition of her extraordinary leadership in directly assisting victims of human trafficking for more than a quarter of a century, lending her expertise in the creation of anti-trafficking training materials and films, and maintaining a strong relationship with the Polish Government to prevent the exploitation of refugees across the Poland-Ukraine border.



**Irena
Dawid-Olczyk**
Poland

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO



**Apinya
Tajit**
Thailand

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO

In recognition of her heartfelt and unwavering persistence in advocating for workers exploited in forced labor, particularly in the fishing industry, assisting victims with their reintegration into society, and sharing her expertise with government officials and anti-trafficking authorities.



**Kateryna
Cherepakha**
Ukraine

Trafficking in Persons Report
2022
HERO

In recognition of her remarkable engagement with the Government of Ukraine and international stakeholders to build the capacity of officials to identify victims of human trafficking, her tireless victim advocacy, and her work developing and conducting training courses for first responders as an OSCE National Expert.

Tier Rankings and Findings

The 2022 report chronicles significant successes: 30 countries meet minimum standards for governmental action established by the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act, receiving Tier I rankings. These standards include steps to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, and protect survivors effectively.

Of note, Germany was upgraded to Tier 1 after three years on Tier 2. The upgrade was based on increased prosecutions and convictions of traffickers and the opening of several new shelters, including shelters to serve male victims. However, only 66 percent of convicted traffickers received suspended sentences, further perpetuating the sense of impunity traffickers enjoy.

Meanwhile, South Korea was taken off Tier 1 for the first time since the first published TIP report in 2001. In addition to fewer investigations and prosecutions, South Korea did not identify any victims in its migrant worker programs despite numerous credible reports. Moreover, most convicted traffickers were sentenced to less than a year in jail or fines. The TIP Report also highlighted the fact that South Korea did not take steps to stop prosecuting trafficking victims for a criminal activity directed by their traffickers.

Most countries do not meet minimum standards to address human trafficking. Ninety-nine countries received Tier 2 rankings, indicating they are trying to meet minimum criteria but fall short; 35 received Tier 2 Watchlist rankings, meaning they do not meet minimum standards and risk being downgraded to a lower tier; and 22 countries received Tier 3 rankings, indicating they are not even trying to meet minimum standards.

As in past years, most prosecutions for human trafficking focus on sex trafficking while victims of forced labor largely are not protected, and labor traffickers are not held accountable.

Approximately 13 percent of prosecutions for human trafficking globally were for labor trafficking. Only seven of 228 federal human trafficking prosecutions in the United States were for forced labor. As stated in the TIP report on page 582, “There was a continued lack of progress to comprehensively address labor trafficking in the United States, including in efforts to identify victims, provide them specialized services, and hold labor traffickers, including contractors and recruiters, accountable.” Globally, there must be economic consequences for employers and corporations who benefit from forced labor.



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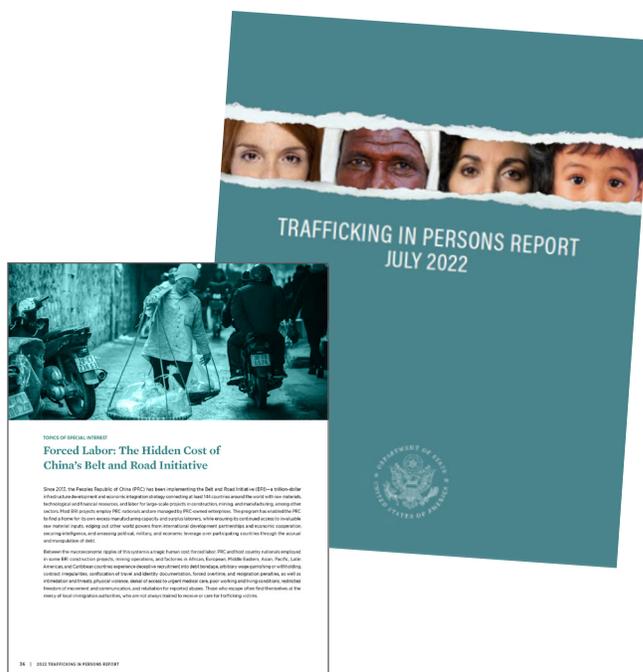
While the United States was cited for arresting survivors of human trafficking in some cases for the unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit and for not providing needed protection for some victim-witnesses during their case, Ireland was moved from the Tier 2 watchlist to Tier 2 for addressing the persistent problem of governments prosecuting victims for the unlawful acts their traffickers force them to commit. In addition, Ireland expunged more than six hundred criminal convictions for commercial sex offenses, which will allow survivors to move forward without the burden of a criminal record.

Other notable upgrades included Iceland, Belize, Romania, Thailand, and Uganda. Meanwhile, seven new countries joined fifteen others in Tier 3: Belarus, Brunei, Cambodia, Curacao, Macau, St. Maarten and Vietnam.

Topics of Special Interest

Forced Labor: The Hidden Cost of China's Belt and Road Initiative

Since 2013, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has been implementing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) — a trillion-dollar infrastructure development and economic integration strategy connecting at least 144 countries around the world with raw materials, technological and financial resources, and labor for large-scale projects in construction, mining, and manufacturing, among other sectors. Most BRI projects employ PRC nationals and are managed by PRC-owned enterprises. The program has enabled the PRC to find a home for its own excess manufacturing capacity and surplus laborers while ensuring its continued access to invaluable raw material inputs, amassing political, military, and economic leverage over participating countries through the accrual and manipulation of debt. All this at a tragic human cost, forced labor. Please click [here](#) to read more on pages 36 and 37 of the report.



Last year, a man from a rural community in the PRC hoping to raise money for his family responded to a recruitment ad for a high-paying steel production job in Indonesia. When he arrived, his employers took his passport, told him he would be paid significantly less than he was promised, and forced him to work hours far beyond the schedule to which he had agreed. Within months, he was sneaking away from his workstation to post surreptitious pictures of himself online with handwritten notes begging for someone to help him get home. His family contacted the local PRC consular services to try and pressure the factory to return his passport but to no avail. He and four other laborers eventually managed to pool their money to hire a PRC national broker to help them leave the country, but the broker just took their money and brought them to yet another PRC-affiliated industrial park in Indonesia where they toiled for months under similarly abusive conditions. They continued saving money until they could pay a smuggler to take them to Malaysia, but when they reached their destination, the smuggler dumped them in the water off the coast. They had to swim to shore, where they were shot at, arrested, and detained by the local authorities.

Topics of Special Interest *continued . . .*

The Climate Crisis: Exacerbating Vulnerabilities

Climate change has the potential to become one of the main drivers of population displacement, internally and across international borders. It is estimated that by the first half of 2021, millions of people around the globe were forcibly displaced due to generalized violence, human rights violations, armed conflicts, and increasing threats caused by climate change. While climate change does not discriminate, underserved and marginalized communities are more likely to experience its impacts and, consequently, even more, vulnerable to trafficking. Human trafficking has the potential to increase by 20-30 percent during humanitarian disasters due to lost livelihoods and disrupted families.

Significant legal and governmental action is required to protect and support those impacted by the climate crisis. Leaders, activists, governments, NGOs, and international organizations are increasing efforts to protect those most vulnerable by mitigating and preparing for climate-related disasters, developing programs for those displaced by climate change, and advocating for the rights of those marginalized and most vulnerable to climate change and exploitation. All such efforts should be informed not only by climate experts but also by survivor leaders and other individuals who have experienced displacement or other vulnerabilities because of climate change.

Some actions taken to reduce both climate change and exploitation include:

The UN promotes accelerating decarbonization, investing in green jobs and sustainable growth, further implementing sustainable solutions, confronting climate risks, and advancing cooperation, as no country can succeed alone. With these actions, governments can mitigate the impact of climate change and better protect those most vulnerable to exploitation.

The NGO Refugees International created the Climate Displacement Program. The program plays an important role in advancing, developing, and promoting solutions to ensure that people displaced due to climate-related disasters receive humanitarian assistance and are not subject to human rights abuses.

President Biden issued an Executive Order instructing U.S. Federal agencies to develop and work with international multi-stakeholder initiatives on protections for those displaced by climate change that will offer more legal protections and reduce exploitation.

Please click [here](#) to read more about this special interest topic on the impact of climate change on human trafficking.

Forced Labor and the Clean Energy Transition

Forced labor in supply chains is pervasive in the global marketplace. The increasing demand for clean energy technologies to address the climate crisis presents an opportunity to emphasize the importance of establishing new clean energy supply chains that uphold human rights, enable countries to meet global climate targets, and generate economic growth.

Silicon metal for solar photovoltaic (PV) modules and cobalt for electric vehicle (EV) batteries are examples of inputs needed for important clean energy technologies that are often sourced from areas with long and complicated histories of human rights abuses, including forced labor and forced child labor.

Manufacturers of silicon metal used by the solar supply chain and other sectors are sourced from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and directly engage in state-sponsored forced labor programs targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), artisanal and small-scale mining of cobalt has been associated with forced child labor and other abuses. These examples highlight the urgent need for adherence to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in extractive sector supply chains to avoid labor and human rights abuses and ensure a just energy transition.

The urgent need to tackle the climate crisis presents governments and the private sector with both a challenge and an opportunity to build new critical supply chains that incorporate human rights, transparency, and sustainability standards by design and prevent human trafficking. Please click [here](#) to read more about clean energy and forced labor from the TIP report.



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Topics of Special Interest *continued . . .*

Practices in Data Collection, Management, Dissemination

Unbiased and comprehensive data is crucial to highlighting trends, informing decision-making on domestic policies and priorities, updating anti-trafficking legislation, and appropriately allocating resources, from the local to the national level. While advanced software and database systems can be helpful, they are not essential to building informative data. Instead, consistency and usability across stakeholders, integration into existing administrative data systems, and security of victims' identities are key. To read more, please click [here](#) to go to page 51 of the TIP Report.

Examples of Innovative Human Trafficking Data Collection, Management, Dissemination

The Government of the Philippines created the Integrated Case Management System, which is a single technology platform leveraged by several government agencies to address issues around interagency coordination needed to assist Filipino trafficking victims, who are often exploited outside the country, and to prosecute their traffickers.

In partnership with an NGO, Uganda's Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions developed the Trafficking in Persons Mobile App Platform, which collects and disseminates standardized data pertaining to human trafficking investigations and prosecutions, enabling government agencies to track suspected and convicted traffickers and trends in trafficking in persons.

Linking Efforts to Combat Corruption and Trafficking in Persons

A 2021 research report by UNODC and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime highlights the role of corruption in facilitating trafficking in persons and perpetuating impunity for traffickers. The role of corruption in human trafficking has been shown in individual cases of trafficking victims in multiple sectors and contexts from the fishing industry, domestic service, the kafala system, and construction for the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Impunity remains the norm in many places and industries, as both human traffickers and the corrupt officials who facilitate these crimes operate with little fear of prosecution.

Government officials engage in corruption by assisting unscrupulous or unlicensed recruitment agencies during the recruitment of workers for overseas employment, providing false documentation, and enabling illegal movements across borders and immigration controls. They can also facilitate or turn a blind eye to ongoing illicit activities such as prostitution or facilitate the acquisition, sale, or border crossing of goods that may have been produced by forced labor.

Corrupt officials who accept bribes hamper criminal justice proceedings by obstructing the reporting and gathering of evidence, influencing witnesses, tipping off traffickers of pending raids and investigations, or otherwise interfering with the prosecution of perpetrators of illegal activities. . Some government officials abuse their position of authority to extort sex or forced labor from individuals in their care in exchange for access to food, medicine, education, or other benefits or goods.

Corruption by police and the judiciary emboldens human traffickers to operate with impunity, contributes to the loss of public trust, and facilitates the further victimization of the very individuals they are supposed to protect from crime.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime notes that trafficking in persons could not occur on a large scale without corruption. It notes that "trafficking in persons and corruption are closely linked criminal activities."

Under U.S. law, the TVPA requires the Secretary of State to describe government efforts to combat trafficking each year and places great focus on corruption and complicity, which undermine such efforts. As part of the Minimum Standards indicia of "serious and sustained efforts," the TVPA requires an assessment of whether a government took law enforcement action against officials who participated in, facilitated, condoned, or were otherwise complicit in human trafficking crimes. Thus, concerns about official complicity in trafficking crimes weigh heavily in the TIP Report's country assessments.

To read more, please click [here](#). Pages 56 and 57 of the report include Recommendations for Linking and Furthering Anti-corruption and Anti-trafficking Efforts.



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