

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT 2009

----- Senegal (TIER 2 Watch List) -----

Senegal is a source, transit, and destination country for children and women trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficking within the country is more prevalent than trans-border trafficking and the majority of victims are children. Within Senegal, religious teachers traffic boys, called talibe, by promising to educate them, but subjecting them instead to forced begging and physical abuse. A 2007 study done by UNICEF, the ILO and the World Bank found that 6,480 talibe were forced to beg in Dakar alone. Women and girls are trafficked for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation -- including exploitation by foreign sex tourists -- within Senegal. Children are also trafficked for forced labor in gold mines within Senegal. Transnationally, boys are trafficked to Senegal from The Gambia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea for forced begging by religious teachers. Senegalese children are trafficked to Mali, Guinea, and possibly other West African countries for forced labor in gold mines. Senegalese women and girls are trafficked to neighboring countries, the Middle East, and Europe for domestic servitude and possibly for sexual exploitation. Women and girls from other West African countries, particularly Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria may be trafficked to Senegal for sexual exploitation, including for sex tourism.

The Government of Senegal does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources. The government continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to protecting child trafficking victims during the year by providing them with shelter, rehabilitation and reintegration services. Despite these overall significant efforts, the government did not show progress in prosecuting, convicting, and punishing trafficking offenders over the last year; therefore, Senegal is placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

Recommendations for Senegal: Intensify efforts to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders; ensure that the Ministry of Interior's Special Commissariat Against Sex Tourism and the Tourism Ministry's sex tourism police unit arrest suspected sex tourists and rescue their victims; and increase efforts to raise awareness about trafficking.

Prosecution -----

The Government of Senegal demonstrated insufficient anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts during the year. Senegal prohibits all forms of trafficking through its 2005 Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices and to Protect Victims. The law's prescribed penalties of five to 10 years, imprisonment for all forms of trafficking are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for rape. The government reported that it arrested two religious teachers for abusing boys they had trafficked for forced begging. The government did not report any additional arrests, prosecutions, or convictions of trafficking offenses. During the year, the Ministry of Justice's Center for Judicial Training conducted a UNICEF-funded training for police, gendarmerie, and immigration officials to educate them about trafficking. Although the government in 2007 activated two special police units to combat child sex tourism, one within the Interior Ministry and the other within the Tourism Ministry, these units did not report any law enforcement actions against foreign pedophiles. The Ministry of the Interior, through its Bureau of Investigations, continued to work with Interpol to monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking.

Protection

The Government of Senegal sustained solid efforts to protect trafficking victims over the last year. The government continued to operate the Ginndi Center, its shelter for destitute children, including trafficking victims. While the Family Ministry, which funds and operates the Center with support from international donors, began using a donor-funded computerized database to track trafficking victims in 2006, the center recently stopped using the database due to lack of funds. The center, which has the capacity to house 60 children at a time, assisted 949 foreign and Senegalese destitute children, including trafficking victims, over the last year. With international organization and NGO assistance, 807 children were reunited with their families and 69 were trained in vocational centers located in the Ginndi center. The government also continued to operate its free child protection hotline out of the Ginndi Center. In the last year, the hotline received 17,501 calls, though it is not known how many of these calls related to human trafficking. The government also sometimes referred trafficking victims to NGOs for care on an ad hoc basis. The government espoused a policy of encouraging victims to assist in trafficking investigations or prosecutions in part by permitting closed door victim testimonies during trafficking prosecutions. The government did not report, however, that it encouraged any victims to assist in prosecutions during the last year. The government provided legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims to countries where they faced hardship or retribution. Trafficking victims had the option of remaining temporarily or permanently in Senegal under the status of resident or refugee. Victims were not inappropriately incarcerated or fined for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

Prevention

The Government of Senegal made modest efforts to raise awareness about trafficking during the reporting period. As part of its program against the worst forms of child labor, the Family Ministry continued to conduct donor-funded workshops and roundtables in Mbour, Dakar and other areas of the country to raise awareness about forced child begging, child domestic servitude, and child prostitution. In 2008, the Family Ministry collaborated with the ILO and the Governments of Mali, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Burkina Faso to implement a 12-month regional anti-trafficking project. The project collected information on the parameters of regional trafficking and organized donor-funded anti-trafficking workshops for 60 police, gendarmerie, and customs officials from the participating countries. In December 2008, project participants released a document listing 68 best practices to combat trafficking in the region. The government did not take steps to reduce demand for commercial sex acts in Senegal. The government did not take measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of peacekeeping missions do not engage in or facilitate trafficking.