

Trafficking in Persons Interim Assessment

January 3, 2005

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President in December 2003, requires the Department of State to submit to the Congress an Interim Assessment of the progress made by countries on the September 2004 Special Watch List to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) since the June 2004 annual report [available on the State Department website at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/>].

This year 49 countries are on the Special Watch List. These countries either 1) had moved up a tier in the TIP Report over the last year or 2) were ranked on Tier 2 in the TIP Report but a) had not shown evidence of increasing efforts to address TIP, b) were placed on Tier 2 because of commitments to carry out additional future actions over the coming year, or c) had a large or growing number of trafficking victims. 46 of the 49 countries on the Special Watch List are in the second category--ranked as "Tier 2 Watch List,"--including four countries initially ranked as "Tier 3" in the June 2004 TIP Report, but reassessed as Tier 2 Watch List countries by the State Department in September 2004 (Bangladesh, Ecuador, Guyana, and Sierra Leone).

The Interim Assessment is intended to serve as a tool by which to gauge the anti-trafficking progress of countries that are in danger of slipping a tier in the upcoming June 2005 TIP Report, particularly those in danger of slipping to Tier 3. It serves as a tightly focused progress report, assessing progress a government has made in addressing the relevant country's key deficiencies highlighted in the June 2004 TIP Report. The Interim Assessment concentrates on concrete actions governments have taken since the annual June 2004 TIP Report. Effectively this is a May through November timeframe, given the time that is needed to draft and publish the June TIP Report and this Interim Assessment. Readers are requested to refer back to the annual TIP Report for an analysis of large-scale efforts and a description of the trafficking problem in each particular country.

Africa

Cote d'Ivoire

Due to the current political instability in Cote d'Ivoire, the efforts of the Government to address trafficking in persons have been severely hampered and cannot be adequately assessed. We hope to submit a report on Cote d'Ivoire as part of the 2005 Annual Report.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made progress in its efforts to demobilize and protect child soldiers. Since October 2003, the Government has demobilized approximately 2,000 children associated with armed groups. Some military commanders have actively assisted in this process. In May, the Government finalized and implemented procedures for issuing official demobilization certificates to children associated with armed groups. Most demobilized child soldiers have received their certificates, offering protection from re-recruitment and allowing them the opportunity to receive assistance from humanitarian organizations and to be reintegrated into their home communities.

The national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) technical committee is working with UN agencies, donors, and NGOs to ensure that the needs of children associated with armed groups are adequately addressed in the newly-created national DDR plan. The section of the plan focusing on children will be implemented first. In addition, Congolese military and civilian officials responded quickly to NGO and UN agency requests for assistance with child protection issues. For instance, prison officials have worked cooperatively with UN child protection officers to remove children from the general prison population.

The Government also made progress in furthering its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Earlier this year, judicial authorities in South Kivu initiated legal proceedings against a known recruiter of child soldiers.

Ethiopia

The Government of Ethiopia has made progress in furthering its anti-trafficking efforts. It has nearly completed a revision of its penal code, which now contains several provisions that close significant loopholes in the current code. For example, in addition to women and girls, the revised penal code now outlaws trafficking of men and boys for both prostitution and labor. The Ministry of Justice consulted widely with NGOs, relevant ministries, and international organizations while preparing improvements to the draft penal code, even holding meetings in the regional states down to the district level. The Ministry of Justice also began the process of regularly collecting law enforcement statistics on TIP-related investigations, prosecutions, and convictions at the international, national, and regional levels, though no such statistics have yet been produced.

The Government has also made progress in providing protection to victims of trafficking. The Government formed a multi-agency anti-trafficking task force headed by the Ministry of Justice's Vice Minister. The group, which includes all key governmental organizations, convened and began developing a long-term strategy for providing care to trafficking victims and training law enforcement, judicial and prosecutorial officials in victim care methodologies. The task force also formed three working-level subcommittees for legal issues, data collection, and public awareness and media relations. These committees began examining the nature and extent of the trafficking problem; assembling, distributing, and analyzing existing studies on the issue to serve as a baseline; determining which organizations and institutions have roles to play in anti-TIP efforts; and publicizing TIP-related messages through the local media. The Ministry of Justice has drafted a proposal for anti-trafficking awareness training and outreach workshops and is actively seeking funding for it from international donors.

Gabon

The Government of Gabon made little progress in furthering its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. A bill criminalizing child trafficking has been signed into law by President Bongo Ondimba, but has yet to be applied in practice.

The Government made little other appreciable progress in combating human trafficking. The trafficking hotline set up by UNICEF still exists, but is not consistently answered. A 16 year-old trafficking victim from Benin recently sought help at a local police station; her ordeal, and an ensuing police investigation, have received national press coverage. There were no reports of traffickers being detained or arrested, nor of any investigations concerning the circumstances under which children may have become the victims of trafficking. The Government has not publicized its efforts (if any) to protect victims or prevent trafficking from occurring.

Kenya

The Government of Kenya has made noticeable progress in furthering its anti-trafficking efforts. The Kenyan Police Service (KPS) has staffed the Human Trafficking Unit. Ten individuals were assigned to this new unit housed within the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) to lead the operational elements of human trafficking investigations. In addition, the Ministry of Home Affairs seconded two immigration officers to the unit to track the movements of, and share information on, individuals suspected of human trafficking. One month after its creation, this unit had its first successful investigation into, and operation against, an alleged international child trafficking ring operating between Kenya and the UK. The Government sent seven individuals to regional training on human trafficking and the Department of Immigration held a workshop on border security that included a day-long TIP component.

The Government initiated a broad public awareness campaign focused on increasing media coverage of regional human trafficking trends. The KPS, in conjunction with the Ministry of Information, conducted background and on-the-record interviews with each of the major Kenyan daily newspapers to increase awareness of the phenomenon and seek the public's assistance with ongoing investigations. The Ministry of Tourism published a report on the sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry and officials met with members of coastal tourism boards to explore how best to target hotel managers and guests with messages against trafficking for sexual exploitation. The government-wide distribution of a human trafficking brochure has led to an increased awareness of the issue among ministry officials.

The Government has continued to encourage a police-media partnership in publicizing investigations related to alleged cases of domestic and international TIP. The KPS has repeatedly released TIP-related arrest statistics to the media. The Government also increased its attendance and participation as speakers in civil society-hosted seminars on issues such as human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women.

Madagascar

The Government of Madagascar has made strong progress in addressing anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) concerns, directing unprecedented high-level attention to the issue. The President's Chief of Staff established a special inter-ministerial committee that meets weekly and has adopted a national plan to combat trafficking and slavery. This plan delineates specific activities, stakeholders and responsible ministries, deadlines, and measures of success.

The Government began a review of existing anti-trafficking legislation to ensure its sufficiency. After breaking up several fraudulent international adoption rings, the Ministry of Justice elected to first tackle adoption regulations and intends to present a draft law to Parliament before January 2005. After completing adoption reform, the ministry will overhaul anti-TIP legislation.

The Government has significantly enhanced its efforts to curb child prostitution. Enforcement of existing laws barring minors from nightclubs has increased dramatically. The Minors' Brigade of Antananarivo has conducted three separate raids of nightclubs, identifying 53 minors illegally present. In addition, three new Minors' Brigades have been created in the provinces. The Government partnered with UNICEF to train police in six provincial cities in protecting the rights of these minors. A new cohort of Ministry of Tourism Administrative Controllers was charged with identifying tour operators offering sexual tourism services and reporting such activities to the police.

The Government has also bolstered its ability to assist victimized child workers through Welcome Centers. One center is operational in Antananarivo and the Ministry of Labor has broken ground on two additional centers in Tamatave and Tulear. Since July, the Antananarivo center has rescued over 200 children occupied in the worst forms of child labor, including prostitution, and reintroduced many into the educational or vocational training system.

Awareness of trafficking in persons has increased through an aggressive information campaign. The Government has presented four local dialect sketches on prostitution, placed two articles on child labor in the national press, broadcast 20 educational programs on national radio stations, and initiated a national drawing, poetry and essay contest on the theme of combating child labor. Several anti-trafficking movies are in production.

Malawi

The Government of Malawi made progress in furthering its anti-trafficking efforts. The GOM clarified the status of the previously drafted legislation--Penal Code Amendment 12--which was not withdrawn as reported, but rather delayed because members of Parliament requested additional time to fully understand and study the issue, which has been an unfamiliar concept in Malawi. Parliament and various Ministers are currently involved in renewed consultations on a specific law to criminalize human trafficking and how best to revise the proposed amendment, given new information on trafficking in Malawi. In addition, the Government established a special court to specifically deal with children's legal issues and is in the final stages of passing a Child Justice Act.

The Government also made appreciable progress in caring for victims of trafficking. In May, it conducted a rapid assessment of the situation of orphans in the country, determining that they are at particular risk of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. To counter this, the Government has developed and launched a national action plan for orphans and vulnerable children that aims to reduce the root causes of victimization. This plan is providing for training for more than 200 new child protection officers that will be placed in districts across the country. In addition, 37 Victim's Support Units have been established throughout the country, with the mandate to provide protective and support services to exploited children, including trafficking victims.

The Government's long-term victim protection strategy targets both prostitutes and those at risk of becoming prostitutes, particularly children. By offering options such as education and vocational training to child prostitutes and those youth vulnerable to involvement in prostitution, the Malawi Government is directly contributing to their social reintegration and rehabilitation.

Mauritania

The Government of Mauritania made progress in furthering its fight against trafficking. In July, an updated Labor Code that includes a number of penalties for forced labor convictions passed into law. The Commission on Human Rights, the Fight Against Poverty, and Insertion (CDHLCPI) hosted a roundtable on human rights topics, including the new Labor Code, the anti-trafficking law, women's and children's rights, and the rights of young girls working in large urban households. The country's single radio station broadcast the roundtable nationwide. Plans for workshops to publicize both the anti-trafficking law and Labor Code are well underway, as well as for the distribution of 4,000 audio cassettes in semi-urban and rural areas that discuss these pieces of legislation. The Government held a two-day training program for mid-level officers at the Nouakchott Police Academy on properly handling victims of sexual violence and exploitation.

The Government established an inter-ministerial working group on trafficking that includes Director-level officials from the CDHLCPI and Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Labor, and Communications. This group has convened on several occasions and has committed to biweekly meetings to discuss anti-trafficking efforts and progress.

The Government demonstrated progress in developing economic and social programs to integrate former slaves into society. The CDHLCPI initiated three projects addressing this issue, with a specific focus on the southern and southeastern regions where the vast majority of Black Moors (former slaves and the descendants of slaves) are concentrated. These projects include providing microcredit financing and income-generating activities to an estimated 160,000 people; developing agricultural infrastructure and capabilities for rural populations; and alleviating poverty through locally-designed and implemented projects to meet local needs.

Nigeria

The Government of Nigeria made progress in efforts to address trafficking in persons (TIP). It increased the staffing of its new National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) to over 150 people. Officials delivered lectures on the new anti-trafficking law to immigration officials, judges and magistrates. They also delivered copies of the law to the police command in every state and various media offices, and discussed it on talk shows and state programs. NAPTIP established a National Investigation Task Force (NITF) that set up small units in 11 states with the worst trafficking problems. It trained NITF on the provisions of the anti-TIP law, care of victims, Interpol standards, and corruption and human rights issues.

To address the problem of law enforcement officers and immigration and airport authorities collaborating in trafficking across Nigeria's borders, NAPTIP briefed the heads of police and immigration on the issue. NAPTIP officials also met with several major traditional leaders to raise their awareness about trafficking and the new law. Since February, NAPTIP has investigated 35 TIP-related cases, at times collaborating with the Spanish police, the Italian National Anti-Mafia Bureau, and Benin Republic police. Arrests were made in 13 cases, 4 of which have gone to court. One trial was completed and the judgment is pending. Immigration Service anti-trafficking units supported NAPTIP in surveillance, arrests, and prosecutions, including receiving, interviewing, and locating the relatives of deported victims. In November, the High Court of Edo State delivered the first conviction under the new anti-trafficking law, sentencing a woman to three years' imprisonment for attempting to traffic six girls to Spain.

The Government also made progress in assisting trafficking victims. During the year, NAPTIP provided shelter or referral to entities offering protection assistance to 74 victims. Working with the International Organization for Migration, it opened a 120-bed shelter for victims in July. It also established a 24-hour hotline for victims and those desiring to provide information. Limited progress was seen on the Government's anti-TIP media campaign. NAPTIP created a website to provide trafficking information to the public; developed relationships with newspaper chiefs to encourage giving priority to TIP stories; and produced television advertisements to publicize its work, though it lacks funding to air them.

Senegal

The Government of Senegal has made limited, initial progress in addressing gaps in its anti-trafficking efforts. To strengthen its relevant legislation, the Government formed a commission to review and revise Senegal's penal code and harmonize the code with international treaty commitments concerning trafficking in persons (TIP). The commission, which just began its work, is expected to recommend laws that criminalize and punish all forms of trafficking in persons. The Government has set a June 2005 deadline for passage of implementing legislation.

The Government has also made progress in its efforts to investigate and monitor trafficking-related cases. Forty-one Senegalese police officers and investigators were trained to enter cases into a database formulated specifically to collect, correlate and analyze information on trafficking in persons and related crimes. At the conclusion of the most recent training program in October, the Assistant Director General of National Safety publicly stated that the Ministry of Interior will soon establish a central office for TIP-related law enforcement efforts at the headquarters of the Judicial Police. In addition, Senegal signed a bilateral accord with Mali to repatriate trafficked children and is currently discussing similar accords with Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and The Gambia. Moreover, the Government has established a national child protection hotline and a center to receive children, including trafficking victims.

Sierra Leone

The Government of Sierra Leone has made progress in its efforts to address trafficking in persons (TIP) concerns. To address legislative weaknesses, the Government organized a cabinet-level working group to draft a national law on trafficking in persons, which is now before Parliament. In addition, the Freetown City Council introduced municipal legislation to ban the entrance of minors into nightclubs, and other municipalities are also strengthening their stance against the prostitution of minors. The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) convene a bi-weekly meeting on combating TIP that is attended by various ministries and local and international NGOs.

The Government demonstrated progress in investigating TIP crimes. In November, the SLP arrested 7 people who were allegedly attempting to traffic a total of 43 children. To improve such efforts, the SLP are developing a training manual on combating trafficking and have drafted a proposal seeking financial and personnel assistance in delivering the training. The SLP have reached an agreement with an NGO to provide one-hour anti-trafficking training sessions for local police in the Western Area. Fifty police officers attended anti-trafficking training, including instruction on what action to take if victims are found. Victim protection procedures have featured prominently in training sessions.

The Government has made progress in carrying out a trafficking awareness media campaign. Officials are frequently seen in local newspapers speaking out against trafficking, and SLP officials have conducted radio discussions on the subject. In addition, National Vision for Sierra Leone, an entity comprised of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, NGOs, clergy, and the Government, sponsored an art exhibit created by trafficking victims in a library and exhibition space in Freetown.

Tanzania

Since the release of the 2004 Report, the Government of Tanzania has directed unprecedented high-level attention to trafficking in persons. In July, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) convened a meeting of permanent secretaries and senior civil servants to discuss the trafficking situation in Tanzania, police investigations into trafficking cases, and existing anti-trafficking statutes. The MFA tasked each ministry with compiling a comprehensive report of recent actions taken to combat trafficking. This report was provided to State Department officials during a visit to Tanzania in July.

The Government made significant progress in furthering its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Currently, three trafficking-related cases are pending in court, while investigations on two additional cases are underway. In addition, immigration officials, working with police, uncovered an international human trafficking ring in October, arresting 31 suspected traffickers. After the arrests were made, the Regional Immigration Officer made a public statement condemning the use of Tanzania as a transit country for human trafficking. Eight mid-level Tanzanian police officers attended a trafficking-in-persons investigation course. Drawing upon this training, the police have begun drafting specific procedures for use during trafficking-related investigations.

The Government also made progress in preventing trafficking. Local government officials at the ward level sit on district committees that identify children vulnerable to or involved in the worst forms of child labor, including prostitution and forced domestic labor. These committees designate specific children eligible for targeted protection services offered by the International Labor Organization, including rehabilitation, education, and alternative training.

Zambia

The Government of Zambia has made progress in furthering its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. In November, Parliament passed comprehensive child protection legislation that prohibits all forms of slavery, as well as procuring or offering a child for illicit activities, including prostitution. Police and the courts have successfully intervened in several trafficking cases. In July, police arrested a man who offered to sell two children to a local businessman. In October, police intercepted 14 Congolese girls between the ages of 5 and 17 bound for South Africa where they were promised jobs. The Congolese woman accompanying the children was arrested.

The Government took significant steps to implement a strategy providing shelter and protection to vulnerable children, including prostitutes. The Government has contracted numerous NGOs and faith-based organizations across the country to provide interim accommodations to at-risk children. Based on the results of a children's needs assessment, the youth will be reintegrated with their families, provided long-term shelter and education by civil society organizations, or relocated to a Zambia National Service camp for skills training.

In September, the Government announced the formation of an inter-ministerial human trafficking committee designed to focus attention, strategies, and resources to combat the practice. The committee is comprised of representatives from the Drug Enforcement Commission, the Zambia Police Service, and the Ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Sports, Youth, and Child Development. A coordinator of all anti-trafficking in persons activities has been designated.

Zimbabwe

The Government of Zimbabwe made limited progress in its efforts to address trafficking in persons (TIP). In November, the Government collaborated with Interpol's Subregional Bureau for Southern Africa to host a Regional Working Meeting on Trafficking in Human Beings in Harare. The meeting focused on regional cooperation between law enforcement and NGOs to conduct investigations, identify victims, and provide care for victims. Officials from the immigration department, Attorney General's office, and Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) were in attendance. The ZRP presented a list of recommendations for the Government on cooperation, enacting anti-TIP legislation, providing training, and conducting bilateral investigations to track trafficking across borders.

The Government is collaborating on a regional effort with the International Organization of Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a regional declaration on trafficking in persons, as well as a plan of action that will focus on assessing the scope of the problem and formulating anti-TIP legislation. The Government is solidifying plans for an anti-TIP educational training program for prosecutors and judges.

East Asia and the Pacific

Japan

The Government of Japan has made modest progress in prosecuting traffickers and providing better assistance to trafficking victims, and has drafted a national action plan on trafficking in persons (TIP) as part of a broader Penal Code revision that will include a legal definition of trafficking. This action plan places a higher priority on protecting trafficking victims while lowering the priority to address their immigration status. Victims are to be placed in government-run domestic violence shelters in addition to NGO facilities, according to the plan. The Government is considering ways to devote additional resources for victim protection in government-run shelters, and possibly in private shelters as well. Twelve trafficking victims were provided government protection from January through October 2004; an increase over the six victims sheltered in all of 2003. The National Police Agency (NPA) has made limited efforts to improve the handling of trafficking cases and has provided guidelines on victim identification and treatment to local police forces. There are indications of some increase in the number of prosecutions and convictions and in the number of trafficking victims offered protection; final figures will be available for the annual TIP Report. The NPA has taken concrete steps to improve cooperation with foreign law enforcement agencies on trafficking cases.

The Government has made substantive efforts to improve the legal framework for addressing TIP and has drafted revisions to Japan's criminal code that specifically criminalize trafficking and increase penalties for trafficking-related offenses. The Japanese Government has announced plans to reduce significantly the issuance of entertainer visas to women from the Philippines. The Government is also looking at ways to improve the adjudication of applications and to ensure the integrity of travel documentation. The entertainer visas are believed to be used by traffickers to enslave thousands of Filipinas in Japan each year.

Laos

The Government of Laos has made noticeable but uneven progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). In particular, the Government has recognized the status of trafficking victims and made efforts to educate provincial and district-level officials on the need to protect these victims. It has also passed a new anti-TIP law that criminalizes trafficking, provides for the protection of victims, both internally and through international cooperation, and prohibits fining trafficking victims returning to Laos. With the opening of an anti-trafficking office operated jointly by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MOLSW) and the Ministry of Public Security (MOPS), there has been an increase in the number of trafficking-related investigations and prosecutions reported. The Government also continued to raise awareness in the media on the dangers of trafficking, both at its own expense and in cooperation with NGOs.

Although Laos made progress in some areas, resource constraints hampered the Government's ability to make appreciable progress in other areas, including additional resources for victim protection. The Government is expanding efforts to work with NGOs and has requested NGO assistance in providing vocational training and setting up another shelter for returnees. The Government has made minimal efforts to distinguish trafficking victims from illegal returning migrants. While the Lao Government enhanced its collaboration with Thai authorities, it has yet to establish an official mechanism to identify trafficking victims among returnees to the country.

Philippines

The Government of the Philippines has made increased but uneven progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). In particular, government officials have facilitated an increasing awareness among both officials and the public of the new anti-trafficking law through varied training initiatives and information seminars. With the finalization of the implementing rules and regulations of the new anti-TIP law, there has been an increase in the number of investigations and prosecutions. An estimated 10-12 cases have been filed under the new law. The Government has dedicated four state prosecutors to work on trafficking-related cases and continues to use an assortment of other laws to prosecute trafficking cases. The Government is developing a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on trafficking-related cases that is expected to be in place by January 2005.

Although the Philippines made progress in implementing its new anti-TIP law, progress to tighten the regulations governing the issuance of entertainer visas, primarily to Japan, has been slow. There was also little reported progress by the Philippine Government to address trafficking-related official corruption, especially corruption related to the certification process for entertainer visas. While the number of entertainer visas issued to Japan remains high, the Government recently transferred the certification authority for entertainer visas to the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA). POEA has increased information dissemination and anti-trafficking training for licensing agencies and entertainers going overseas and allowed only licensed recruitment agencies to submit applications, in an attempt to curtail the exploitation of entertainer visas.

Thailand

The Government of Thailand has made minimal progress in improving the screening (identification) and protection for foreign trafficking victims, particularly Cambodian trafficking victims exploited in street work. Of over 18,000 undocumented Cambodians detained by Thai immigration from January to October 2004, only 55 trafficking victims--all children--were identified and referred to protective care. The Royal Thai Police have charged 14 individuals with trafficking these 55 children. Cambodian NGOs report that Cambodian child trafficking victims continued to be incarcerated in and deported from Thailand without proper victim care or attempts to investigate the trafficking crimes committed against these children.

The Thai Government has taken steps to protect foreign children found in street work by increasing general awareness of the national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on protection of minor victims, increasing cooperation by Thai police and immigration officials, and training for immigration officers nationally. The Government still lacks an official mechanism to identify trafficking victims from among the hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants in Thailand, and the Immigration Bureau has not made trafficking a priority. Bilateral and regional MOUs do not require the Government to make efforts to screen illegal migrants for trafficking victims. While reports suggest increased efforts by police and immigration officials to provide protection to underage trafficking victims, international organizations and NGOs continue to play the most important role in screening foreign children found in street work for trafficking victims. Protection by the government is provided only after victims are identified by NGO or government social workers.

The Government has expressed strong political will in countering trafficking in persons. The Prime Minister held a national-level meeting of law enforcement and government officials in August to emphasize the increased priority given to the crime. The Government committed additional resources to combating trafficking--most notably a \$12 million fund derived from state lottery proceeds to provide care for TIP victims--and has directed greater prosecution and anti-corruption efforts.

Vietnam

The Government of Vietnam has made noticeable but uneven progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). In particular, the Government has developed and issued a national action plan to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation. Although there was a reported decline in the number of trafficking-related investigations and prosecutions in the last six months, the rate of convictions was sustained.

In addition to implementing strategies to address trafficking for sexual exploitation, the Government took steps to provide greater protection for Vietnamese workers sent abroad by labor export companies. The Government stationed labor attaches in the nine top labor export-receiving countries to look after the welfare of workers and to assist in resolving workplace disputes. The Government also increased its authority over labor export companies and imposed penalties and sanctions against companies that violated labor laws or regulations. The revised labor code currently being implemented by the Vietnamese Government has provisions that allow workers to negotiate settlements from labor export companies in cases of fraud or abuse.

Europe and Eurasia

Azerbaijan

The Government of Azerbaijan has made limited progress in addressing trafficking in persons. While a few important steps have been taken, deficiencies remain in formalizing victim assistance services, safeguarding against corruption, and adopting anti-trafficking legislation.

In May 2004, President Aliyev signed a decree ordering all government bodies to implement the new National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The decree named a deputy minister of Internal Affairs as the National Coordinator for anti-trafficking efforts. Since then, the Government has created a special anti-trafficking police unit; however, there is concern about the informal process used to select the members of this unit (i.e., they are not properly vetted). The Government has not yet created a shelter or a hotline for victims. Since mid-August, law enforcement Ministry of Internal Affairs officials referred nine victims to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Government drafted anti-trafficking legislation and amendments to the Criminal Code, but the draft legislation has not yet been finalized. The Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that 10 people have been convicted of trafficking crimes in the last half of 2004, according to the current Criminal Code provisions, such as coercion into prostitution and operating a brothel.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has undertaken significant efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP), although challenges remain in adequately protecting domestic victims of trafficking and effectively raising the level of public awareness about trafficking. While Bosnia and Herzegovina has a law on the protection of foreign victims of trafficking, it does not yet have a comparable piece of legislation regarding domestic victims of trafficking, resulting in a lack of institutional capability to handle them. The National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator is well aware of this gap in the legislative framework and is working on drafting a law on domestic trafficking victims.

Bosnia is in the process of reforming its police practices and establishing a nation-wide police agency that will increase investigative capacity for complex cases and address the organized crime aspect. There have been relatively few prosecutions of major traffickers under the new anti-trafficking legislation that provides for stiff sentences for leaders of organized crime networks, but new cases indicate that prosecutors are making increasingly effective use of provisions of the law on protection of foreign victims of trafficking, and that they are more closely examining prostitution cases to ascertain whether they may be appropriately prosecuted under anti-TIP provisions. Authorities continue to pursue investigations into official corruption and implication in TIP activities.

Croatia

The Government of Croatia's progress in addressing trafficking in persons (TIP) has been mixed. While progress was seen in specific areas, no traffickers were convicted through mid-November of 2004. The Anti-Trafficking Committee developed a new National Action Plan for 2005-2008 in November, encompassing international and NGO recommendations. However, overall, the Committee met infrequently and produced few concrete results. Government officials from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Interior have received extensive trafficking victim identification training along with other types of anti-trafficking training, and the Ministry of Education has designed a TIP education module that will be added to the standard high school curriculum. In addition, the Police Academy has incorporated TIP training in its curriculum.

In July 2004, the Government adopted the Law on Human Trafficking and Slavery, and that law became effective in October. Officials noted a slight increase in the number of trafficking-related investigations and indictments, but as of mid-November there had been no trafficking-related convictions and no persons had been prosecuted under the new anti-trafficking legislation. The Government had not developed a resource list of assistance services to disseminate to potential trafficking victims by police and service providers, but the Ministry of Interior distributed resource materials on the International Organization for Migration to suspected victims.

Cyprus

The Government of Cyprus has made modest progress in its efforts to combat trafficking; a number of planned government initiatives have yet to be approved and implemented. Two intergovernmental groups meet regularly to discuss anti-trafficking efforts and promote information sharing. The groups expect to officially present to the Government a national plan to combat trafficking and legislation to address trafficking and immigration by the end of 2004. There was a significant increase in trafficking-related arrests in the first 10 months of 2004, 173 vice 26 in 2003. Additionally, 15 cases are being tried under 2000 anti-trafficking legislation, although no one has been convicted.

While police produced press releases on every trafficking in persons-related arrest, the Government has funded no large-scale efforts to educate the public on trafficking. The Government froze the issuing of new cabaret licenses in June 2004. It has prohibited hiring replacements of women on "artiste" visas who are identified as victims and removed from their cabaret employment. Women who are trafficking victims and leave a cabaret now have the right to stay in Cyprus and receive legal advice and financial assistance if they agree to aid the police in prosecuting their former employer or the person who trafficked them to the island. The Government has also set aside several rooms for trafficking victims in government-subsidized homes for the elderly until more permanent shelters can be secured. Victim protection remains inadequate. The Government drafted, but has not yet finalized or distributed, an information sheet to provide to newly arrived female foreign workers.

Estonia

The Government of Estonia showed evidence of increasing efforts to address trafficking by establishing an interagency coordination body; establishing a formal referral system for victim assistance; providing financial support for training and outreach activities; and increasing trafficking investigations, convictions, and victim identification.

Since the 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report, the Government of Estonia has formed an interagency group at the Under Secretary level that drafted input for the National Action Plan on Trafficking. The Social Ministry and Police have concluded an agreement on victim support, to include a cadre of specialists and volunteers to better render assistance to victims. The Government has coordinated and partially financed five anti-trafficking training programs. While there were no trafficking prosecutions in 2003, one prosecution of nine traffickers under the "enslavement" provision of Estonia's law is moving forward in court. While Tallinn Police continued raids on brothels, closing 28 of an estimated 45 existing brothels this year, at the time of this report, complete statistics were unavailable on the numbers of trafficking victims identified and assisted.

Georgia

The recently elected Government of Georgia has taken initial steps indicating an increase in efforts to address trafficking in persons (TIP) beyond the work begun by the previous administration, although some key reforms must still be addressed. The new Government appointed a government-wide anti-trafficking coordinator who is the head of the Human Rights Unit of the National Security Council. The Government expects to adopt a National Action Plan against Trafficking for 2005-2007 by Presidential Decree in December. The Anti-TIP Unit within the Ministry of Interior, which had been merged into the Organized Crime Department over the summer, has been reestablished as an independent unit and the former director has been reinstated and allocated a staff of 10. A branch of the unit has also been set up in Batumi, an important gateway for trafficking, with a staff of 4 expected to soon increase to 10.

While a formal government-wide referral system is not yet in place, the Government identified the establishment of a victim referral system as a key part of the draft Action Plan. In recent trafficking cases, government agencies have referred victims to the Public Defenders office, which then contacted local NGOs and the International Organization for Migration to provide victim assistance, creating a de facto system of referral. The Police Academy is re-designing its curriculum and intends to include TIP-sensitive training. The draft Action Plan also calls for biannual special training programs for judges, police, and border guards. Increased information sharing among the various Georgian law-enforcement entities has yielded a significant increase in the number of trafficking investigations and arrests in 2004. In July 2004, a police investigation led to the rescue and return of 14 trafficked Uzbek women being held in Georgia. The Georgian Government has also cooperated in trafficking cases with the Governments of Greece and Ukraine in 2004.

Greece

While the Government of Greece has taken some significant steps to combat trafficking in persons (TIP), such as appointing a government-wide coordinator and drafting a comprehensive national action plan, key efforts and results in the area of victim protection remain lacking. The number of victims identified in Greece has not increased significantly, nor has the number of victims referred to shelters. The Government recently agreed to allow NGOs access to its women's immigrant detention facility near Athens where trafficking victims may be found. A Government supported, NGO-run shelter for TIP victims, the first in the northern region, opened in Thessaloniki in November. The Ministry of Health reported that 23 residence permits had been given to victims of trafficking since May 2004, and NGOs support these figures. While the number of victims given residency status does not yet reflect the scope of the problem, it is an improvement over the zero victims granted residency status in 2003.

In early November 2004, the Government Committee of the Secretaries General designated an anti-trafficking coordinator. This Committee, which shares interagency trafficking-related information, meets twice monthly and is presided over by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice. The Government published arrests and numbers of cases involving trafficking in persons for the first six months of 2004. The Government began keeping statistics on TIP-related crimes in January 2004, and the majority of those cases are still going through court proceedings. For this reason, the Government says it has not yet been able to provide statistics on prosecutions or convictions, but has promised such statistics starting in January 2005. The Government made pledges to support NGOs' public awareness campaigns, although it is unclear whether this action produced tangible results. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects the bilateral agreement with Albania on the issue of trafficking in children to be ready by year's end.

Kazakhstan

The Government of Kazakhstan has shown moderate progress in implementing its National Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons adopted in February 2004. Accomplishments include employing a small amount of discretionary funds for anti-trafficking efforts by ministries, agencies and regional governments and concluding formal agreements with NGO-run victim crisis centers. The Government has not yet implemented mandatory anti-trafficking school curricula, though it plans to do so by the end of 2005. The Government has not yet issued regulations that would allow Kazakhstan to become a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Financial Police Agency have earmarked budgets for witness protection programs that are used, in part, for trafficking victims. The Ministry of Culture, Information, and Sports (MCIS) provided a small amount of funds to the Union of Crisis Centers that supports women victims of violence, including trafficking victims. The MCIS also supported the costs of publishing anti-trafficking information in the media. The Ministry of Justice reported that police departments in all regions have formalized relationships with the victim crisis centers. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice is drafting a nation-wide memorandum of understanding to enhance the relationship between key government ministries and anti-trafficking NGOs. The Ministry of Education expects to provide a unit on trafficking in persons as part of its core curriculum class on “Basics of Law” no later than the next school year and possibly as soon as the end of this school year.

Russia

While the Government of Russia has made progress in combating trafficking in persons (TIP), for example by passing witness protection legislation and arresting a number of traffickers, more work remains to be done. Russia has yet to pass comprehensive protection legislation specifically for trafficking victims and to develop a comprehensive victim assistance system.

In August 2004, the Government adopted witness protection legislation that creates a statutory basis for the protection of trafficking victims and their families by relocation and other means. The legislation is well funded and broadly drafted to specifically address the protection of both victims and their families. To ensure that the police are aware of new anti-trafficking legislation and how to investigate trafficking cases, the Ministry of the Interior, working with others, brought police instructors from 23 regional training academies to undergo a week-long, *train-the-trainer* conference in October 2004. Attendees received compilations of Russian anti-trafficking legislation and a comprehensive anti-trafficking NGO directory for Russia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has publicly underscored its commitment to assist TIP victims worldwide. Recently, the Russian Embassy in Malta played a key role in the repatriation of Russian victims in a Maltese Russian trafficking case. At a November 29th Duma hearing, the Deputy Procurator General delivered a comprehensive report on the Procuracy's efforts to prosecute TIP cases. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also provided a report on the work of its newly-formed special TIP investigative units, which have cooperated with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and numerous other countries on TIP prosecutions.

Serbia and Montenegro

The Governments of constituent republics Serbia and Montenegro do not have joint counter-trafficking institutions, but do conduct joint counter-trafficking activities on an ad hoc basis; this interim assessment will examine each republic's activities separately. Overall, since the 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report, both have shown modest progress in increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP).

The Republic of Serbia:

In October 2004, the Government formed specialized units within the Border Police for fighting illegal migration and trafficking in persons. Seventy officers from 20 police districts' anti-trafficking teams were given supplementary trafficking awareness training. The Interior Ministry formed a special unit to provide security for witnesses in criminal proceedings. The Government is finalizing a witness protection law that will formalize the witness protection programs already in place. The Interior Ministry also formalized temporary residency for victims (for three months, six months, or one year). The Government established a ministerial-level anti-trafficking Council on October 14, 2004. There has been an increase in the number of traffickers arrested, but a lack of centralized information on judicial proceedings in TIP cases impeded the Government's ability to report prosecutions and convictions. The Government also sponsored numerous public awareness activities, including incorporating anti-trafficking education into the high school curriculum and broadcasting a trafficking documentary on a government-owned television station.

The Republic of Montenegro:

Montenegro re-established its special police anti-trafficking team in April 2004. Anti-trafficking liaison officers have been assigned to each of Montenegro's seven police districts. Cooperation between the anti-trafficking team and the Border Police has increased. In July of 2004, the Minister of Justice appointed the Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime (including trafficking). The Witness Protection law was passed on October 19, 2004. From May to November, 16 people faced prosecution in 9 trafficking-in-persons cases. On November 25, the Basic Criminal Court in Rozaje passed down the first ever conviction for trafficking in persons in Montenegro, sentencing the defendant to five months in prison. In September, the Ministry of Health established in Berane a regional trafficking crisis center staffed with health professionals, social workers, and psychologists.

Tajikistan

The Government of Tajikistan has made appreciable progress in adopting comprehensive trafficking in persons (TIP) legislation and establishing a specialized anti-trafficking police unit. Challenges lie in establishing a national action plan and identifying victims' needs as a first step to creating a victim referral system between law enforcement officials and NGOs.

President Rahmonov signed Tajikistan's Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons on August 1, 2004. The law addresses prevention of trafficking, prosecution of traffickers, and protection of victims. On May 5, 2004, the Government officially created the Special Division for Combating Kidnapping, Trafficking in Persons, and Racketeering. Five officers of the new division are dedicated to the investigation of TIP cases. On November 4, 2004, a Dushanbe court sentenced Jahon Hilalova to fourteen years imprisonment, Tajikistan's first verdict under its new anti-trafficking legislation. The Government of Tajikistan has not developed a national plan on combating trafficking in persons. However, in accordance with the new anti-trafficking legislation, the Government plans to establish by year's end an interagency commission that will develop a state policy or national plan on combating trafficking. Anti-trafficking training for law enforcement has been initiated by providing 300 copies of an anti-trafficking handbook to Department of Interior officials, officers, and prosecutors. In addition, government representatives participated in seminars and training sessions for law enforcement agencies.

Turkey

The Government of Turkey has shown some anti-trafficking progress through training of officials, assistance to an increased number of trafficking victims, and the establishment of a victim hotline. However, it has not undertaken a focused, effective public awareness campaign.

On June 29, 2004, the Government finalized an agreement with a leading local anti-trafficking NGO to establish the first shelter for victims of trafficking in Turkey. On November 2, 2004, the shelter successfully managed the repatriation of its first victims, three Ukrainian women referred by enforcement officers after an October 31 raid in Istanbul. The NGO has sheltered more than 10 victims, including a victim who volunteered to lead investigators to her traffickers, who were subsequently arrested.

In a combined effort by the Government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the partner NGO, more than 50 victims of trafficking were assisted in voluntary returns in 2004, up from less than 5 in 2003. The partner NGO started in December a part-time toll-free hotline for trafficking victims. The Government contributed funds for IOM anti-trafficking training. According to official statistics, since June 2004, 332 law enforcement officers participated in anti-trafficking training courses. The Government also incorporated trafficking sensitivity and screening training in academy curricula for new national police and Jandarma recruits. Neighboring governments and NGOs reported that Turkey's implementation of bilateral anti-trafficking protocols and agreements remains inconsistent, though media reports documented several successful anti-trafficking police operations with some source countries.

Uzbekistan

The Government of Uzbekistan continues to make significant efforts to combat trafficking, particularly in the area of enforcement. The Government has opened nearly 180 cases, apprehended 228 suspects, and identified 531 victims. Areas to watch include the effectiveness of the interagency working group to combat trafficking, the status of the comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation in the legislature, and the institutionalization of a screening and referral system to identify trafficking victims by law enforcement and effectively refer them to assistance centers.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs created an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit in March of 2004 under the Criminal Investigations Division. The head of the division has visited each region in Uzbekistan to meet with local officials and assess regional measures and cooperation on trafficking in persons. Law enforcement efforts remained active and awareness campaigns, jointly sponsored by the Uzbek Government and the International Organization for Migration, continued. Cooperation between NGOs, international organizations, and government ministries continued to improve.

Near East

Qatar

The Government of Qatar has made some progress in addressing shortcomings identified in the 2004 TIP Report. However, this progress remains uneven and inadequate given the overall scope of Qatar's anti-trafficking concerns. Actions included the formation of a national anti-TIP committee and appointment of a national coordinator to oversee the government's effort to monitor and combat trafficking, the investigation of over 20 cases of trafficking offenses since June 2004, some of which are still pending and unresolved, (last year Qatar prosecuted about 10 cases), and the inauguration of a hotline for victims of trafficking. The Government has begun the drafting of new legislation that would establish 18 as the minimum age for work as camel jockeys and set penalties for those caught breaking the law.

The Government has not shown any significant effort to rescue the significant number of children trafficked into the country as camel jockeys; nor has the Government made any discernable effort to prosecute the traffickers behind this child trafficking. Domestic workers still lack adequate protection under Qatar's labor laws, although the Government has drafted a new law that has a provision which could be used to extend protection to this group of workers. The Government, however, has yet to take concrete steps to make this possible.

South Asia

Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh has made general progress in sustaining, institutionalizing, and integrating the various anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) measures it has adopted since June 2004. Bangladesh's new anti-TIP inter-ministerial taskforce meets and reports monthly to the Home Secretary based on a daily report the former receives from a nationwide TIP monitoring cell. The Home Secretary continues to serve as the national coordinator overseeing Bangladesh's anti-TIP efforts. Because its Home Ministry is still working with other agencies to develop a national anti-TIP action plan, Bangladesh has made little progress in implementing it.

Bangladesh continues to make significant progress in prosecuting trafficking cases. Since June its prosecution efforts have produced 78 convictions for trafficking offenses; this stands in stark contrast to the 17 convictions obtained during all of 2003. Similarly, the Government has made clear progress in investigating the abuse and forced labor of children in the fishing industry in the vast archipelago of the Bay of Bengal. Since October, Bangladesh Police and Coast Guard have rescued a total of 129 children from these islands.

Since June, the Government has investigated eight officials allegedly complicit in trafficking; a marked increase from the absence of any such cases in 2003. The Government of Bangladesh also continued to cooperate and work well with NGOs involved in anti-TIP efforts; it referred victims to various NGOs for care. The Government has yet to make evident progress in conducting broad anti-TIP public campaigns.

India

The Government of India has shown little progress in addressing anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) concerns since May. While a new TIP coordinator, the Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), has greatly improved coordination of protection and prevention efforts, and trafficking convictions have increased significantly in two major trafficking centers, two other major metropolitan areas have made little progress to address India's huge trafficking problem. There have been negligible steps taken by central government law enforcement agencies to coordinate and develop a national-level law enforcement response to TIP. Local level law enforcement efforts, aided in part by NGOs, have improved slightly in two cities, while in others, the progress has been minimal. India's TIP efforts remain handicapped by a lack of central government coordination of relevant implementing agencies and apparently disparate levels of priority among them given to addressing TIP.

In Mumbai, convictions for trafficking-related offenses increased from 3 in 2003 to 11 thus far in 2004 but remain grossly unrepresentative in a city of over 18 million inhabitants. In Delhi, trafficking-related convictions totaled 68 thus far in 2004, also a significant increase over total 2003 convictions. In Calcutta, however, trafficking-related convictions totaled only 6 thus far in 2004, whereas 15 were obtained in 2003. Trafficking-related arrests have doubled in the state of Tamil Nadu.

The Government's appointment of the Secretary of the DWCD as chairperson of the government's anti-trafficking Central Advisory Committee (CAC) has led to improved coordination of anti-TIP efforts throughout the central government. The CAC Chairperson has led the revision of India's anti-TIP law that promises to decrease punishments to trafficking victims and to create a central "nodal authority" within DWCD to improve anti-TIP coordination and to serve as a national TIP information-sharing center.

Pakistan

The Government of Pakistan has shown some progress in its anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) efforts. The Government has created an Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Secretary of the Interior to oversee and coordinate its national anti-TIP policy. The Committee meets biweekly and has charged the Joint Secretary within the Ministry of Interior to develop an anti-trafficking prosecution, prevention, and protection policy. The Minister of Interior has personally engaged in the work of the committee and has participated in several national seminars on trafficking organized in cooperation with international organizations. The Government has launched an educational campaign focused on the plight of camel jockeys as part of its overall prevention effort.

The Government increased the number of arrests, prosecutions and convictions of traffickers in 2004. In addition, it has: created a dedicated Anti-Trafficking Unit (ATU) within the Federal Investigation Agency; drafted implementing regulations for its human trafficking ordinance; and forged an interagency agreement to create special courts with expedited hearing procedures for trafficking cases. The new implementing regulations include provisions designed to differentiate trafficking from smuggling cases. In addition, the newly formed ATU is developing an operational manual that includes procedures designed to prevent the harassment or punishment of trafficking victims.

The Government is building a model shelter in Islamabad, to be opened by mid-2005 to assist and protect victims referred by the ATU and other law enforcement agencies. In addition, the Government has formed a Binational Commission with Iran to improve cooperation on cross-border issues including trafficking.

Western Hemisphere

Belize

The Government of Belize has made modest progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). The Government acknowledges there is a significant problem and has appointed a high-level government official to coordinate its trafficking in persons taskforce. The Government's commitment to undertake significant efforts to prosecute traffickers was evidenced by four raids of businesses and private homes where traffickers allegedly operated. There have been four convictions and two additional cases are pending.

In recent months, a few government officials have spoken out on the dangers of TIP. However, due in part to resource constraints, Belize has not made significant progress in increasing victim protection and raising awareness in the country on the dangers of trafficking in persons. The Government participated in some training on TIP, but minimal efforts were made to improve protection of the country's border areas. Some foreign women found in Belize brothels were interviewed and deported. There were no reports of action taken against TIP-related corruption.

Bolivia

The Government of Bolivia has shown uneven and inadequate progress in addressing its anti-trafficking deficiencies. While the Government made progress in raising public awareness of trafficking issues, it did not demonstrate an increased anti-trafficking commitment through increased law enforcement actions against traffickers or through the appointment of a government anti-trafficking coordinator.

In November, Bolivian immigration and the Vice Ministry of Youth joined with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization of American States to hold a workshop targeting government and civil society actors with the objective of raising awareness on commercial sexual exploitation of minors. The Bolivian Government created an inter-agency commission to address trafficking that is co-chaired by the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Government (which includes police and immigration services). The commission held its first meeting in October.

Canada

The Government of Canada has made only limited progress to implement strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). The Government acknowledges there is a significant problem and has an anti-TIP interdepartmental working group, which is comprised of 17 departments and agencies. The working group reported that there are at least five on-going trafficking in persons investigations. During the assessment period, there were no reports of any convictions under Canada's new anti-TIP law.

Senior government officials have spoken out on the dangers of TIP, and more resources are being devoted to border control. The Government has announced that it will take action against the temporary worker program that allows foreign women to come to Canada to be exotic dancers. However, no significant efforts have been taken to address the reportedly large number of Korean girls and women trafficked through Canada to the United States.

Dominican Republic

The Government of the Dominican Republic has made inadequate progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). The Government acknowledges a significant TIP problem and has appointed high-level government officials to coordinate the country's anti-TIP national strategy. The newly appointed Attorney General has spoken out strongly on TIP and appointed a person within his office to coordinate anti-TIP efforts. The new Government of the Dominican Republic has made strong commitments to combat corruption, including promises to take action against corrupt immigration officials. Both the previous and current (new) governments removed several officials complicit in trafficking from their posts, but no public official has been prosecuted or convicted for trafficking-related corruption.

There has been limited progress in prosecuting suspected alien smugglers and traffickers. Progress has been slow in prosecuting accused traffickers Maria Martinez Nunez and Congressman Radhames Ramos Garcia. Authorities have raided several establishments, arrested some alleged traffickers, and have rescued dozens of victims, many of them children. The Dominican Navy attempts to identify trafficked persons through its post interdiction interrogations. There have been no convictions of traffickers under the Dominican Republic's 2003 anti-trafficking law. Government officials have spoken out against TIP and have begun working with community leaders in problem areas to identify traffickers and trafficking victims. Several training sessions on TIP for government officials have resulted in more vigorous investigations of trafficking. The Diplomatic and Consular school continues to offer TIP training as part of its curriculum.

Ecuador

The Government of Ecuador has shown uneven and overall inadequate progress in addressing anti-trafficking deficiencies in the country. While the Government took new positive steps to develop and publicize anti-trafficking policy, expand cooperation with NGOs, and revise laws in areas related to child sexual exploitation and trafficking, it did not show progress in prosecuting traffickers who lure minors into prostitution and in expanding cooperation with destination countries to detect and dismantle trafficking rings.

A national plan for combating trafficking in persons (TIP) was announced by Presidential Decree on August 14. At the same time, a national TIP coordinator was named and an inter-agency working group was established to address TIP issues and policies. The Government of Ecuador also requested the International Labor Organization's (ILO) assistance to establish a model TIP victim facility, and the Ministry of Government worked with the ILO to train 250 police officers on combating commercial sexual exploitation of minors. The President of Ecuador's Supreme Court and the Foreign Ministry both hosted conferences to increase awareness and encourage coordination between the government, NGOs, and international organizations in combating TIP. Legislative proposals to update laws, mostly focusing on abuse and exploitation of minors, were introduced to the National Congress in the fall. The revisions include some language about TIP but are not comprehensive TIP legislation.

Guatemala

The Government of Guatemala has made noticeable progress in addressing anti-trafficking deficiencies. The Government acknowledges there is a significant problem and has appointed a high-level government official to coordinate its anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) national strategy. The Government's commitment to undertake significant efforts to prosecute traffickers was demonstrated by conducting 113 raids of bars, brothels, and other establishments where traffickers are known to be operating. The raids resulted in 40 arrests. Both the National Civilian Police (PNC) and the Attorney General's Office have set up specialized units to concentrate on TIP. These units have increased their individual activities to interdict and prosecute traffickers and improved the coordination between their respective departments. Efforts to improve the legal framework in the country to increase penalties for traffickers have been undertaken by the Guatemalan Congress.

Although Guatemala has made appreciable progress in some areas, resource constraints have hampered the government's ability to make appreciable progress in other areas, particularly with victim assistance and prevention strategies. To date, efforts to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Guatemala and Mexico aimed at protecting and rescuing trafficking victims along the Guatemala-Mexico border remain at the political level.

Guyana

The Government of Guyana made appreciable progress in devoting more resources to anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) efforts, cooperating with the international community, modernizing national laws to sanction traffickers and keep minors out of prostitution, rescuing and protecting victims, and taking prevention measures.

The Government of Guyana provided training to community leaders on how to use existing laws to address TIP and co-sponsored, with the International Organization for Migration, training for community leaders on how to identify TIP and assist victims. Guyanese officials initiated contact with Suriname officials on a trans-border case involving trafficked minors and worked with UNICEF on victim identification and assistance and production of TIP educational materials. A new and much-needed draft TIP law was introduced to the National Assembly in October. A Special Unit was created within the Women's Affairs Bureau to identify and rescue victims and two young trafficking victims received assistance in a trans-border case still under investigation. Guyana's anti-TIP coordinator, Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security Shaddick, led a town hall meeting initiative in the Port Kaituma area in July and the Government distributed public service announcement materials that were aired on television during cricket matches, a peak period for public viewership.

Honduras

The Government of Honduras has made some noticeable progress to implement strategies to combat trafficking in persons. The Government's commitment to undertake significant efforts to prosecute traffickers was evidenced by the convictions of several traffickers in October 2004. Efforts to amend the criminal code to increase penalties against traffickers and to protect and prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of minors are currently pending in the Honduran Congress.

The Government has also expanded efforts to work with NGOs, marked by its signing of an agreement to work with NGOs on repatriations of trafficking victims. Additionally, in July 2004, the Government inaugurated a facility to provide shelter services and housing for third country nationals awaiting repatriation to their country of origin. Honduras has undertaken modest efforts to conduct raids and rescue victims. There was little reported progress in addressing trafficking-related corruption in the country.

Jamaica

The Government of Jamaica has made no noticeable progress in implementing strategies to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). The Government has been slow to implement a comprehensive anti-TIP policy, and law enforcement efforts against traffickers remain weak. An independent agency was established to address children's issues, but no significant steps have been taken to deal with the country's trafficking problems on a larger scale.

The Government of Jamaica has expressed a general willingness to address the problem, but there has been no reported appreciable progress made during this interim assessment period. Specifically, the Government of Jamaica passed the "Child Care and Protection Act" earlier this year, but there has been no evidence that the Government has increased law enforcement efforts as a result of this law. Minimal efforts have been made to conduct a widespread campaign to educate police and child care givers on the provisions of the law, but these efforts are in the preliminary stages. There has also been minimal progress in conducting raids and rescuing victims.

Mexico

The Government of Mexico has shown some progress in combating trafficking in persons (TIP), but more work is needed in victim protection and prosecution of traffickers. The Government has a number of enforcement actions underway against trafficking networks and is cooperating with the U.S. Government in some trafficking prosecutions. Mexico has also announced the creation of a National Center Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

A comprehensive anti-trafficking bill has been introduced in the Mexican Congress. The Government has designated the Organized Crime Unit (SIEDO) of the Office of the Prosecutor General as the lead federal agency for trafficking prosecutions. A number of senior Mexican Government officials have spoken out against trafficking in persons in recent months, including the First Lady, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of Government, and the Secretary of Labor. In November, the Government hosted a conference at which best practices and international anti-TIP cooperation were discussed. The Government has been increasing its cooperation with NGOs. The Mexican immigration service now allows NGO members to interview randomly chosen illegal alien detainees. The Mexican Government has made progress in anti-corruption efforts, arresting over 45 immigration officials earlier this year on charges of corruption.

Mexico is in the preliminary stages of implementing a program, as part of the March 2004 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Guatemala, in which non-work visas will be issued to trafficking victims willing to participate in prosecutions against traffickers. Mexico signed an MOU with the Organization of American States that will allow for an assessment of trafficking in persons and prevention mechanisms in Mexico.

Paraguay

The Government of Paraguay has not made appreciable progress in maintaining law enforcement data on trafficking cases, working cooperatively with Spain and Argentina to close down trafficking rings, or in warning potential victims of the danger of trafficking.

Paraguay's international cooperative efforts focused on securing the return of Paraguayan nationals trafficked to Spain and Argentina. The Attorney General's office began organization of a unit to specialize in prosecuting trafficking cases. Due to the lack of collected law enforcement data on trafficking cases, it is not possible to determine whether recent efforts to charge and prosecute traffickers demonstrate an increase in law enforcement efforts over previous years.

Peru

The Government of Peru made only limited progress on creation of a comprehensive national plan to combat trafficking, arrests and prosecutions for internal trafficking, improved data collection on the trafficking in persons problem, and improved cooperation with Spain. More progress was made in updating statutes to cover trafficking-related offenses and working on cases of international trafficking among Andean countries and to Japan.

A law designed to combat the sexual exploitation of minors was passed in May 2004. An investigation led to the July arrest of a recruiter of women trafficked to Japan for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Peruvian work with Ecuadorian authorities uncovered a network for trafficking victims from Peru to Ecuador for the purpose of forced labor.

Suriname

The Government of Suriname showed uneven and inadequate progress in addressing anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) deficiencies in the country. While the Government made progress in providing law enforcement training and taking steps to identify traffickers, it has not yet demonstrated significant progress in: investigating illegal migration that may veil trafficking operations; prosecuting traffickers; and improving its assistance to victims. There were no reports of arrests or prosecutions of traffickers in Suriname, though the Government reported its cooperative efforts to assist Netherlands Antilles and Guyanese officials working trafficking cases.

Suriname's Ministry of Home Affairs joined with the International Organization for Migration on two large-scale workshops to educate government officials about TIP, including identifying victims and their assistance needs. The Government created a Special TIP Unit as part of the Alien Affairs Office of the Suriname Police. The Government of Suriname also requested U.S. assistance to help Suriname develop anti-TIP law enforcement manuals. Two manuals on identifying and prosecuting TIP, one for immigration officials and one for police, were finalized and distributed.