

THE GAMBIA (Tier 2 Watch List)

The Gambia is a source, transit, and destination country for children and women trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Within The Gambia, women and girls are mostly trafficked for sexual exploitation, in particular to meet the demand for European sex tourism, and for domestic servitude. Boys are trafficked primarily for forced street vending and by religious teachers for forced begging. Transnationally, women, girls, and boys from neighboring countries are trafficked to The Gambia for the same purposes listed above. Primary source countries are Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Benin. Gambian women and girls are trafficked to Senegal for domestic servitude and possibly for sexual exploitation; Gambian boys are trafficked to Senegal for forced begging. Women and children may be trafficked to Europe. Reports during the year of large numbers of Gambian, Senegalese, and other neighboring country nationals being transported from The Gambia to Spain by boat appear to be predominantly cases of smuggling rather than trafficking.

The Government of The Gambia 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 Gambia is placed on Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to eliminate trafficking over the previous year. To strengthen its response to trafficking, The Gambia should: increase enforcement of its law against child trafficking; pass its draft law against all forms of trafficking; increase efforts to identify and care for victims, ensuring that trafficking victims are not incarcerated; and adopt its national action plan against trafficking.

Prosecution

The Government of The Gambia made minimal efforts in its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts during the last year. The Gambia does not prohibit all forms of trafficking, though it prohibits child trafficking through its 2005 Children's Act, which prescribes a sentence of up to life imprisonment - a penalty that is sufficiently stringent. No trafficking offenders, however, have yet been prosecuted under this law. The Department of State for Justice has completed drafting a Human Trafficking Bill, prohibiting all forms of trafficking, that is slated to go before the National Assembly for approval. The government contributed personnel to assist in an NGO-funded child trafficking training for security officials in December 2006 and in a February 2007 NGO-financed training to educate the government's Tourism Security Unit about child trafficking. A senior government official chairs the National Anti-TIP Task Force and was the principal speaker and lead panelist at the February seminar.

The government does not systematically collect trafficking crime data, and consequently did not report any trafficking arrests or prosecutions, though it investigated at least one trafficking case during the year. Border officials continued to ensure that adults bringing children who are not their own into The Gambia have documents showing parental consent. However, when authorities discovered potential traffickers at borders or in The Gambia, they barred them from entry or deported them without taking follow-up action. The government collaborated with NGOs in November 2006 to train child welfare officers about juvenile justice and the Children's Act.

Protection

The Gambian government made modest efforts to provide care for trafficking victims during the year. The Gambia continued to operate the children's shelter it opened in February 2006, and it plans to open a second shelter in the Upper River Region. The government continued to operate its hotline established in 2005. However, because funds available to publicize it are limited, public awareness of the hotline is low and, consequently, few calls have been received. In February 2007, at the Tourism Security Unit training, motorcycles granted to the unit were painted with the hotline number as an advertisement. Once provisions have been made for the hotline to handle urgent requests, the Department plans to publicize it more widely. The government does not encourage victims to assist in trafficking investigations or prosecutions, and it does not provide

legal alternatives to victims' removal to countries where they may face hardship or retribution. Victims may be inappropriately incarcerated, fined or penalized for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked. During periodic enforcement raids, police arrest women and children in prostitution without screening them to identify trafficking victims.

Prevention

The Government of The Gambia made modest efforts to raise awareness about trafficking during the reporting period. During the last year, the government contributed personnel and limited resources to NGO-funded public sensitization campaigns on children's rights and topics such as trafficking through radio and television broadcasts, and sessions with children as well as with religious and community leaders. In July 2006, an NGO-sponsored child trafficking forum in Serrekunda featured a lawyer from the Department of State for Justice as the keynote speaker. Although the government established an anti-trafficking task force, it has not met since August 2006. The government has not yet adopted its draft national action plan against trafficking, which was developed in 2004.