

THE NETHERLANDS¹ (TIER 1)

The Netherlands is a destination and transit country for the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation; some trafficking for labor exploitation occurs. Victims continued to be trafficked from Central and Eastern Europe, Nigeria and Brazil. Reportedly, a significant percentage of the 25,000 individuals engaged in prostitution are trafficking victims. Internal trafficking of young, mostly foreign girls by Moroccan and Turkish pimps into sexual exploitation continued. The Netherlands Antilles, where the Netherlands exercises responsibility over visa issuance according to guidelines issued by the Netherlands Antilles, continued to be a concern as a transit region and destination for illegal migrants, some of whom may have been trafficked.

The Government of the Netherlands fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. In 2005, the government significantly stepped up its law enforcement and prevention efforts to address trafficking in persons. The Dutch government investigated, prosecuted, and convicted more traffickers, and increased its outreach efforts to potential trafficking victims in regulated prostitution sectors. The Dutch government continued to provide comprehensive protection and assistance to victims and increased resources and tools available to NGOs. International scrutiny continued to focus on the legalized commercial sex industry in the Netherlands. The government should ensure its assessment of trafficking in the legalized sector includes a systematic and sensitive screening of all potential trafficking victims, including in the red light district.

Prosecution

The Government of the Netherlands vigorously investigated and prosecuted cases of trafficking during the reporting period. Dutch police investigated 220 suspects of trafficking in 2004. The government prosecuted 253 traffickers, a significant increase from 174 in 2003. Dutch courts convicted 136 traffickers; the majority of sentences ranged from three months' to four years' imprisonment. In 2005 a district court handed down a 14-year sentence for one trafficker in a case involving three African victims; four other traffickers in the case received sentences of five to 10 years. In May 2005, a national expertise center, overseen by the national trafficking prosecutor, began carrying out its mandate to bring together various Dutch investigatory bodies on trafficking cases and to serve as a national resource on investigations and prosecutions. The government, through the expertise center and other forums, continued to conduct specialized training for police, attorneys, inspectors, and other government officials. In 2005, five Dutch men were convicted in a local district court for organizing child sex tours to Tunisia for sex with minors; the men received sentences between one and three and a half years. There was no evidence of official corruption or trafficking-related complicity.

The government reported that strict controls and licensing requirements for brothels were employed as a means of combating trafficking. The Amsterdam police reported that routine checks of brothels did not show evidence of exploitation; during the reporting period these checks did not result in the identification of any trafficking victims, although there are continued reports of victims in legal red light zones. The police also reported difficulty in carrying out effective controls in the unregulated sectors, such as escort services.

Protection

The Dutch government in 2005 continued its leadership, capacity building and funding for service providers and NGOs assisting trafficking victims throughout the Netherlands. Local governments independently funded trafficking shelters and regional networks of NGOs while law enforcement officials coordinated the provision of comprehensive services and protection to victims who assisted in prosecutions. The Dutch Foundation Against Trafficking in Persons (STV), the national reporting center for registration and assistance for trafficking victims, registered 424 trafficking victims in 2005, a modest increase from the 405 registered in 2004. It launched a website and distributed a manual as a practical tool for service providers providing victims with support. The government funded training and reintegration programs implemented by NGOs to assist victims with B-9 status — temporary residency granted for trafficking victims — to develop skills needed to find employment. One program reported that 45 B-9 recipients participated in its training program; 10 have found jobs since the regulation permitting B-9 victims to work went into effect in April 2005.

Prevention

In January 2006, the Dutch government launched a national outreach campaign to reduce trafficking in the prostitution sector. The campaign, managed by the Dutch anonymous crime reporting hotline, primarily targets the clients of women in prostitution and potential victims of trafficking, as well as members of the general public. The campaign reportedly promotes awareness of the warning signs of trafficking and encourages individuals to report potential victims to police or call the hotline. In June 2005, the Justice Ministry distributed victim identification and reintegration guidelines to government officials, including to Dutch consular officers abroad, and NGOs, to encourage increased identification of and assistance to trafficking victims. In 2005, as required by the 2000 law that lifted the ban on brothels, the Ministry began its second assessment of the prostitution sector, including the number of women trafficked into prostitution. As part of the study, women in prostitution in Amsterdam's red light district and other prostitution sectors will be interviewed away from brothels and their possible traffickers. In September 2005, the Justice Ministry signed a covenant with Dutch newspaper associations committing parties to prevent advertising by unregistered escort services, an industry increasingly exploited by traffickers. The Dutch

government committed \$21.3 million dollars between 2004 and 2006 to fund anti-trafficking programs in other countries, particularly source countries for trafficking victims in the Netherlands.

THE DUTCH CARRIBEAN AUTONOMOUS REGIONS

Anecdotal reporting suggests that the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, autonomous regions within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, are transit and destination regions for trafficking of men, women, and children for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, as well as forced labor in the construction and agriculture sectors. Curacao, Aruba, and Saint Maarten are destination islands for women trafficked for the sex trade from Peru, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, according to local observers. At least 500 foreign women reportedly are in prostitution throughout the five islands of the Antilles, some of whom have been trafficked. While in the past women in prostitution could enter the Netherlands Antilles as tourists and engage in prostitution legally for up to three months, special work visas must now be obtained prior to their arrival in the autonomous regions; these permits are not transferable. There are also reports of children being trafficked for sexual exploitation, particularly from the Dominican Republic. Visas for Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles are issued by Dutch Embassies following review by Aruban or Netherlands Antilles' authorities. In 2005, allegations of corruption were made against Aruban and Antillean authorities in both immigration and issuance of work permits. The Antilles government, however, aggressively prosecuted general corruption. In 2005, the Netherlands and Aruba signed a protocol to restrict the admission of women traveling to work as dancers, after allegations emerged that over 400 women in prostitution were issued work permits by the Aruba government illegally. Officials conducted some awareness raising about trafficking during the reporting period. Visa controls were reportedly tightened in 2005. The Dutch government increased funding for an ongoing IOM trafficking prevention and capacity building program in the Antilles, providing \$165,000 in 2005. The governments of the Netherlands, Aruba, and the Netherlands Antilles should collaborate more effectively to detect trafficking to the Antilles and investigate and prosecute those behind this trade.

¹The Netherlands has legalized prostitution. The U.S. Government opposes prostitution and any related activities, including pimping, pandering, and/or maintaining brothels as contributing to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. These activities are inherently harmful and dehumanizing. The U.S. Government's position is that these activities should not be regulated as a legitimate form of work for any human being.