

POLAND (TIER 1)

Poland is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. There were isolated reports of Vietnamese nationals trafficked to Poland for labor exploitation. Polish women are trafficked to Germany, Italy, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Japan, and Israel for purposes of sexual exploitation. The reported number of victims forced to work in the agricultural industry, sweatshops, and begging rings continued to increase in 2005.

The Government of Poland fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Poland continued to improve its anti-trafficking efforts over the last year by enacting its second national action plan, approving its first-ever national budget allocation for foreign trafficking victims' assistance, and commendably created a two-month reflection period for foreign victims, providing them with temporary residence and assistance. The government should increase victim sensitivity training for law enforcement officers and continue to look into reports of trafficking related government corruption.

Prosecution

The Government of Poland sustained its efforts to prosecute trafficking crimes over the last year. Police initiated 22 new trafficking investigations and continued work on 22 previous investigations. Authorities prosecuted 43 individuals for trafficking crimes, resulting in 37 convictions. Sentencing data was not available for 2005; however in 2004, of the 16 traffickers convicted, one trafficker will serve a sentence of one to two years in prison, eight traffickers will serve sentences of three years, and four traffickers will serve three to five years; three traffickers received suspended sentences and will not serve prison time. The Polish National Police participated in several bilateral task forces with other governments through which they exchanged information, tracked the movement of traffickers and victims across borders, and coordinated repatriation of victims. In 2005, Polish police trained counterparts from Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus on how to detect, prevent, and assist trafficking victims. Although there were no reports of government involvement or complicity in trafficking, there were reports of victim harassment and other abuses by police officers. There were also unconfirmed reports that local police have taken bribes to ignore known trafficking activity.

Protection

The Government of Poland continued to make progress in protecting and assisting victims. In 2005, the government amended its Law on Aliens to include a provision that offers foreign trafficking victims a two-month reflection period during which they are given residency in Poland while they decide whether or not to participate in the prosecution of their trafficker. During this reflection period, foreign victims are provided with assistance and support administered through an NGO. Thirty-seven foreign victims assisted law enforcement efforts in 2005. Under Polish law, foreign victims are not eligible for various state-provided services that Polish victims may receive; to remedy this, the government allocated \$80,000 to an NGO to provide assistance to foreign victims. This NGO assisted 79 foreign victims in 2005. Local governments also provided funding to other anti-trafficking NGOs and shelters. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with NGOs and funded the repatriation of victims to Poland.

Prevention

Poland continued to improve its anti-trafficking public awareness efforts over the last year. NGOs and various ministries cooperated on four separate educational campaigns during 2005. An NGO generated educational materials, and school officials disseminated them to public secondary school pupils in four large cities. The same NGO distributed guidebooks on finding safe work abroad to state-run employment offices throughout Poland. Another NGO worked with the Border Guards on a "safe travel" campaign that distributed information, primarily in Russian, to potential victims on employment laws and included contact information for anti-trafficking NGOs and other helpful authorities. This same NGO received a grant from the Ministry of Education to produce educational leaflets to distribute to at-risk groups throughout Poland.