

## **MOLDOVA (Tier 2 Watch List)**

Moldova is a major source, and to a lesser extent, a transit country for women and girls trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Moldovan women are trafficked to Turkey, Israel, the U.A.E., Ukraine, Russia, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Portugal, and Austria. Girls and young women are trafficked internally from rural areas to Chisinau. The small breakaway region of Transnistria in eastern Moldova is outside the central government's control and remained a significant source and transit area for trafficking in persons.

The Government of Moldova does not fully comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Moldova is placed on Tier 2 Watch List because it did not provide evidence that the government is addressing complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials. Trafficking corruption at all levels throughout the government continued unchecked during most of the reporting period. Throughout the year, specific reports surfaced of officials' complicity in trafficking, involving senior government officials, as well as border guards and police officers, though the government made no significant efforts to investigate, prosecute, convict, or sentence these complicit officials. In August 2006, several government investigators, prosecutors and senior officials - including the deputy director of the Center to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) - were dismissed from their jobs for assisting a prominent trafficker and his syndicate, but have not been prosecuted. The Government of Moldova should: vigorously investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence all public officials complicit in trafficking; fund the implementation of a new National Action Plan through its national committee on trafficking; increase resources devoted to victim assistance and protection; and boost proactive efforts to identify trafficking victims and investigate trafficking crimes.

### **Prosecution**

The Government of Moldova showed modest improvement in its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, with an increased number of trafficking investigations during the reporting period. Moldova prohibits trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor through Articles 165 and 206 of its criminal code, respectively. Penalties prescribed range from seven years to life imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and are commensurate with those for other grave crimes. In 2006, authorities investigated 466 trafficking cases, up from 386 in 2005. The Government of Moldova did not provide prosecution data for 2006, however. Convictions were obtained against 71 traffickers in 2006, up from 58 convictions in 2005. Sentencing data for 2006 was inconclusive.

### **Protection**

The government made no real efforts to improve victim assistance and protection in 2006, in part because of its limited resources. Despite implementation of a referral mechanism in five counties, most government officials were not proactive in identifying victims or potential victims, even when allegations were made. Police did refer some underage victims who were repatriated from Russia to NGOs for assistance. All victim assistance and protection continued to be provided by NGOs and international organizations and funded by foreign donors, although the government did provide limited in-kind support to some NGOs. The government in 2006 provided a new building for the IOM-managed and funded rehabilitation center for trafficking victims. Victims are granted a 30-day reflection period. Victims generally do not assist law enforcement with investigations or prosecutions because the government is largely unable to protect victims from retaliation by traffickers. Despite a 2005 law to the contrary, victims continued to be penalized for prostitution or illegal border crossing.

### **Prevention**

Moldova's efforts to prevent trafficking remained weak in 2006. The government continued to rely on NGOs and international organizations to provide the majority of public awareness and education campaigns. Officers from CCTIP met with students and teachers at several schools in Chisinau and provided interviews to local media during the reporting period. Some government officials participated in radio programs discussing trafficking.