

Georgia

Trafficking Routes

Georgia is a country of origin and a country of transit for trafficking in women and children. Victims are trafficked to Greece, Turkey, the United States, Spain, and France (in that order) and, to a lesser extent, to the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Cyprus, Switzerland, Israel, and Denmark.

Georgia is also a transit country for trafficking from Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet states to Turkey and other Mediterranean countries, such as Israel. Armenians have been trafficked through Georgia en route to the United Arab Emirates and Turkey,¹ and Uzbek women have been trafficked through Georgia en route to United Arab Emirates.²

Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Economic hardship, inefficient criminal legislation, and a lack of border controls are cited as the primary reasons for the trafficking phenomenon in Georgia.³

Georgian government officials have reportedly accepted bribes from traffickers.⁴ One organization in Georgia proclaims that trafficking is protected by people in the high echelons of the country's government. The same organization also claims to have information on dozens of travel agencies that are involved in the trafficking industry.⁵

Forms of Trafficking

In 2001, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) interviewed 121 Georgian victims of trafficking, mostly women, who had been sent abroad and forced into prostitution, domestic servitude, agricultural work, or construction work. Of these trafficking victims, 60 percent were under 30 years old. Seventy-

¹ International Organization for Migration, *Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home: A Study of Irregular Migration from Georgia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, September 2001), http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/Georgia_report_sep_01.pdf.

² "Georgia Holds over Dozen Uzbek Women in 'Major' Human Trafficking Case," *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, June 22, 2004.

³ International Organization for Migration, *Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home: A Study of Irregular Migration from Georgia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, September 2001), http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/Georgia_report_sep_01.pdf.

⁴ International Organization for Migration, *Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home: A Study of Irregular Migration from Georgia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, September 2001), http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/Georgia_report_sep_01.pdf.

⁵ Salome Jashi, "The State That Cannot Protect Georgians from Trafficking," *UNA-Georgia Online Magazine*, 13 March 2003.

four percent received false information on jobs abroad through a tourism firm or employment agency, and 93.5 percent indicated that they had no idea that they would or could be subject to sexual exploitation. Ninety-six percent of trafficked migrants indicated that their recruiter had lied about the nature of the job they would do abroad, and that the reality was much worse than what they had been promised. Women were promised jobs as au pairs, fashion models, designers, bar and restaurant workers, and shop assistants. Almost half of the respondents interviewed for the survey were forced to work in nightclubs, in strip bars, or in prostitution. The United States and Turkey were the two primary destinations for forced prostitution, followed by the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Cyprus, and Switzerland (in that order). Women trafficked to Greece, the United States, France, Turkey, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom were also lured with promises of good jobs as housekeepers and nannies, but instead they found themselves forced into domestic servitude.⁶

As of March 2003, the Center for Protection of Rights of Foreign Citizens and Migrants in Georgia had registered 336 victims of trafficking, 265 of whom were women. The center estimates the actual number of women victims to be two to three times that number.⁷

Government Responses

The Criminal Code prohibits trafficking in persons⁸ and trafficking in minors⁹ for purposes of sexual, labor, and other forms of exploitation. Punishment for a crime of trafficking is imprisonment from 5 to 12 years. Under certain aggravated circumstances, punishment is imprisonment for up to 20 years.¹⁰

Anyone who sets up or maintains a brothel is subject to punishment by imprisonment for up to 4 years.¹¹

The Criminal Code prohibits involving minors in prostitution or other antisocial activities. Punishment is 170 to 240 hours of socially useful work, corrective labor for up to 2 years, detention for up to 4 months, or imprisonment for up to 2 years.¹²

Coercing a person into sexual intercourse or another action of a sexual character is punishable by a fine, by corrective labor for up to 1 year, or by imprisonment for up to 2 years.¹³

⁶ International Organization for Migration, *Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home: A Study of Irregular Migration from Georgia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, September 2001), http://www.iom.int/DOCUMENTS/PUBLICATION/EN/Georgia_report_sep_01.pdf.

⁷ Salome Jashi, "The State That Cannot Protect Georgians from Trafficking," *UNA-Georgia Online Magazine*, 13 March 2003.

⁸ Article 143.

⁹ Article 172.

¹⁰ Article 143 and 172.

¹¹ Article 254.

¹² Article 171.

¹³ Article 139.

Anyone who engages another person in prostitution by using force, the threat of force, or deception is subject to imprisonment for up to 2 years. When this crime is committed by an organized group, punishment is imprisonment for up to 5 years.¹⁴

Illegal production, distribution, or promotion of pornographic materials is an offense punishable by a fine and corrective labor or imprisonment for up to 2 years.¹⁵

Illegal restriction of a person's freedom of action is punishable by a fine, corrective labor, or imprisonment for up to 1 year.¹⁶ Also, anyone who threatens another with death, damage to health, or destruction of property is subject to punishment by a fine, socially useful labor or corrective labor for up to 1 year, or imprisonment for up to 3 months.¹⁷

The Criminal Code punishes forgery by a fine, socially useful labor, or imprisonment for up to 3 years. Under certain aggravated circumstances, imprisonment can be for up to 10 years.¹⁸

Misappropriation of document, seal, stamp, or blank is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 2 years.¹⁹

Under the Code of Administrative Violations, prostitution is punished by a warning or a fine.²⁰

In 2000, the president of Georgia issued a decree titled "A Plan for Fighting the Abuse of Women." The decree was to apply for the years 2000–02 and included a provision on trafficking women into sexual exploitation. Under the provision, a number of ministries were instructed to develop assistance programs for victims of trafficking, and cooperation among relevant ministries and nongovernmental organizations was urged. The plan was coordinated by the Department of Human Rights Protection of the National Security Council. However, implementation of the provision was not significant.²¹

In May 2002, a presidential decree on strengthening the measures of protection of human rights in Georgia was adopted. It expressed the need for developing a governmental policy to fight trafficking.²² Thus, in January 2003, the president of Georgia approved the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking.²³ The main objective of the action plan, which is effective from 2003 to 2005, is to enact legislative measures ensuring the human rights protection of the victims of

¹⁴ Article 253.

¹⁵ Article 255.

¹⁶ Article 150.

¹⁷ Article 151.

¹⁸ Article 180.

¹⁹ Article 363.

²⁰ Article 172/3.

²¹ International Organization for Migration, *Analysis of Institutional and Legal Frameworks and Overview of Cooperation Patterns in the Field of Counter-trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, November 2003), p. 83.

²² International Organization for Migration, *Analysis of Institutional and Legal Frameworks and Overview of Cooperation Patterns in the Field of Counter-trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, November 2003), p. 83.

²³ Marc Hulst, *Analysis of Institutional and Legal Frameworks and Overview of Cooperation Patterns in the Field of Counter-trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (Tbilisi: IOM Tbilisi, 2003), p. 3.

trafficking, especially women, adolescents, and children; the prevention of trafficking, assistance to the victims of trafficking; the prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking; the establishment of a victims' protection system; and the monitoring of implemented work.²⁴

In June 2004, Tbilisi police detained 15 young Uzbek women, who were to be taken to Dubai, United Arab Emirates for commercial sexual exploitation. The women claimed that they were lured to Tbilisi under false pretenses, had their passports confiscated, and were told they would have to pay US\$1,000 to return to Uzbekistan.²⁵

Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses

In 2000, WomenAid–Georgia implemented an antitrafficking media awareness campaign called Be Smart! Be Safe!²⁶ Internews produced a public service announcement on trafficking for Georgian television. The announcement targeted women age 18 to 25 and was funded by the IOM.²⁷ In September 2001, the IOM released a report on the extent of trafficking and irregular migration from Georgia.²⁸

Multilateral Initiatives

A 2-day conference of the Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) interior ministers took place in Moldova in June 2004. Representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan participated. The council was to discuss the criminal situation in the CIS and methods to combat drug trafficking and international terrorism, with special attention given to trafficking in persons and illegal migration.²⁹

In May 2005, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention goes beyond the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and enhances the capacity of member states to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and protect the human rights of victims

²⁴ Decree No. 15 of the president of Georgia on the Approval of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking (2003–05), 17 January 2003.

²⁵ “Georgia Holds over Dozen Uzbek Women in ‘Major’ Human Trafficking Case,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, June 22, 2004.

²⁶ WomenAid, “Be Smart! Be Safe!: Anti-trafficking Multimedia Campaign in Georgia,” September 2000, <http://www.womenaid.org/caucasus/antitrafficking/bsbs.htm>.

²⁷ Internews Georgia, “Public Service Announcement on Trafficking,” 15 January 2003, <http://www.internews.org.ge/eng/news.asp?i=102>.

²⁸ “Georgia—Trafficking and Irregular Migration Report,” *IOM Press Briefing Notes*, 14 September 2001.

²⁹ “Moldova to Host Conference of CIS Interior Ministers,” *Arminfo*, 15 June 2004.

of trafficking. The 46 member states of the Council of Europe represent countries of origin, transit, and destination for victims of trafficking.³⁰

³⁰ Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and its Explanatory Report*, Warsaw, 16 May 2005, http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Equality/PDF_Conv_197_Trafficking_E.pdf.