

## **Trafficking in Persons Report 2018**

### **GREECE: Tier 2**

The Government of Greece does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Greece remained on Tier 2. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by establishing formal procedures for the national referral mechanism, and investigating and convicting more traffickers. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government lacked proactive identification efforts, particularly for forced labor and unaccompanied children, and specialized support for victims remained inadequate or inaccessible. Court proceedings often lasted two to six years and lacked victim-centered approaches, hindering cooperation from victims and key witnesses.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GREECE**

Increase proactive identification efforts for victims of forced labor and victims among vulnerable populations and refer them to specialized services; strengthen specialized services including shelter and psycho-social support for all victims, including children, adult males, and victims in rural areas; vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including officials complicit in trafficking; decrease the length of court proceedings for trafficking cases; develop policies for victim-centered prosecutions and implement witness protection provisions already incorporated into law to encourage victims' participation in investigations and prosecutions; take concrete steps to expedite the victim identification process and consistently include psychologists and social workers; provide training to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement on trafficking investigations and prosecutions, particularly in rural areas and for non-specialized staff; train first responders on victim identification and the national referral mechanism; standardize data collection and produce accurate data on anti-trafficking efforts; consistently inform victims of their right to compensation; and draft a national action plan for combating trafficking.

#### **PROSECUTION**

The government increased law enforcement efforts. Article 323A and article 351 of the criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment and a fine between €10,000 (\$12,000) to €50,000 (\$60,020). These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex

trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Police investigated 21 cases with 147 suspects (25 cases with 97 suspects in 2016), 20 cases of sex trafficking and one case of forced labor (18 sex trafficking cases and seven forced labor cases in 2016). The government prosecuted 26 defendants (32 defendants in 2016), 21 defendants for sex trafficking and five defendants for forced labor (25 for sex trafficking and seven for forced labor in 2016). Courts convicted 37 traffickers in 26 cases (11 traffickers in eight cases in 2016), 35 for sex trafficking and two for forced labor (10 for sex trafficking and one for forced labor in 2016). Of the 33 convictions for which the government provided sentencing data, 31 received prison sentences of more than 18 months. Eleven sex traffickers received prison sentences between 18 months and nine years with fines ranging between €1,000 (\$1,200) to €50,000 (\$60,020). Nineteen sex traffickers received prison sentences between 10 years and 20 years with fines ranging between €25,000 (\$30,010) and €71,300 (\$85,590). One labor trafficker received four months imprisonment and another received 10 years with a fine of €50,000 (\$60,020). The government sentenced one trafficker to community-based rehabilitation and could not provide sentencing data for four traffickers. Courts also issued six convictions at the second instance (one in 2016); sentences ranged from three years and a small fine to six years and €10,000 (\$12,000).

The Hellenic Police Unit maintained an Anti-Trafficking Unit (ATU) within the Organized Crime Division composed of two units with 37 officers in Athens and 10 officers in Thessaloniki that investigated trafficking and vice crimes and 12 smaller units across municipalities that investigated trafficking and organized crime. ATU officers conducted joint inspections with labor inspectors on 206 companies and regularly inspected brothels, bars, and massage parlors. However, observers reported the 12 smaller units often consisted of one appointed officer to handle trafficking cases among many other duties and lacked the resources and staff to conduct proactive investigations. NGOs continued to report good cooperation with law enforcement and excellent cooperation with ATU. The government maintained two specialized public prosecutors in Athens; one attached to the first instance court and the other to the appeals court. The government trained front-line officers on trafficking issues, but observers reported non-specialized law enforcement and government officials, particularly in rural areas, lacked an understanding of trafficking. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking; still, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained

concerns. Observers reported traffickers likely bribed state certified interpreters to alter the content of victim statements or influence their testimony. In 2016, the government prosecuted two police officers involved in an organized criminal group that sexually exploited women. The government extradited four suspected traffickers in 2017 (three to Switzerland in 2016) and prepared extradition for two individuals. The government shared information with 14 European countries on trafficking cases.

## **PROTECTION**

The government maintained victim protection efforts. The government identified 38 victims (46 in 2016); 35 victims were subjected to sex trafficking and three to forced begging (26 to sex trafficking, nine to forced labor, and eleven to forced begging in 2016); 24 were adults and 14 were children (30 adults and 16 children in 2016); 34 were female and four male (30 females and 16 males in 2016); and four victims were Greek and 34 were foreign citizens (11 Greeks and 35 foreign citizens in 2016). Statistics included some, but not all, potential victims identified by non-law enforcement entities. First responders followed standard operating procedures for identifying victims. The government, separately and in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs, trained law enforcement, immigration officers, social service workers, labor inspectors, airport staff, and health workers on victim identification. The government reported increased identification efforts targeting migrants and asylum-seekers and slightly improved interagency coordination at migrant reception centers; authorities identified three potential victims in reception centers. However, observers continued to report some cases of inadequate or hasty screening procedures and vulnerability assessments at migrant entry points and camps. ATU and civil society conducted proactive identification efforts, but most government efforts were reactive and identification resulted only from victims self-identifying. GRETA reported a lack of identification efforts for victims of forced labor, particularly in the agriculture sector, cleaning and domestic service, and the tourism industry. Proactive identification among vulnerable unaccompanied children also remained inadequate, including for forced begging and forced criminality. The law mandated public prosecutors to officially recognize victims based on information collected by law enforcement, or a psychologist and a social worker if a victim did not want to cooperate with law enforcement; public prosecutors officially certified all 38 identified victims in 2017 (four in 2016). Official victim status entitled foreign victims to a renewable one-year residence and work permit, but potential victims without this status had

access to equal support and assistance; public prosecutors officially certified 38 victims (four in 2016). Observers reported the government did not consistently use psychologists and social workers for identification procedures and procedures often took six to 12 months for victims to receive official status. Observers also reported the government did not recognize potential victims who were exploited abroad but identified in Greece, creating obstacles in accessing support entitled by law.

The government maintained a national referral mechanism and, in 2017, created and disseminated a manual for identification procedures and standard referral forms. The government also held regular working group meetings to further define roles and responsibilities among law enforcement, government agencies, and NGOs; the labor inspectorate appointed five staff members to participate in the working groups. NGO-run support services reported improved cooperation and increased referrals from law enforcement, but some police officers remained reluctant to refer victims to NGO-run support services. The government, in cooperation with NGOs, provided shelter, psycho-social support, medical care, legal aid, and reintegration support. The government was unable to determine how much funding was spent on victim protection and did not allocate funding to civil society. The government maintained a cooperation agreement with three NGOs to house, protect, and assist vulnerable women and children, including trafficking victims, and allocated three buildings to use as shelters. Observers reported a lack of specialized shelters for trafficking victims; only one NGO-run shelter provided shelter specifically for female trafficking victims. The government provided shelter and general support services to trafficking victims through two agencies: the General Secretariat for Gender Equality operated 19 shelters and 40 counseling centers for female victims of violence and the National Social Solidarity Center operated two long-term shelters, an emergency shelter, and two Social Support Centers for vulnerable populations in need of assistance. Victims in rural areas had little access to support services and were often accommodated in police stations, hospital wards, or received no assistance. Male victims could be accommodated in an NGO-run shelter for sexually exploited men or short-term government shelters for asylum-seekers or homeless persons. Government-run shelters, NGO-run shelters, and facilities for unaccompanied minors accommodated child victims but did not provide specialized support. Observers reported overcrowded facilities for child victims and GRETA reported authorities held unaccompanied children in police cells up to several months due to a lack of shelters. Victims who did not

apply for official recognition could receive a residence and work permit by applying for asylum on humanitarian grounds; the government issued 15 residence permits (23 in 2016). Observers reported the process to receive residence permits took time, but the government granted victims a temporary document that prevented deportation or detainment.

The government may have deported, detained, or restricted freedom of movement of some trafficking victims due to inadequate identification efforts. Experts reported a lack of victim-centered approaches, including cases of law enforcement conducting interviews described by victims as interrogations. There were also reports of authorities not adequately informing victims about court proceedings and lacking interpretation services for foreign victims. Court proceedings often lasted two to six years, which hindered cooperation from victims and key witnesses. The government did not provide funding for travel and other expenses for victims to attend court hearings and observers reported traffickers might have paid bribes to repatriated trafficking victims to preclude them from testifying. The law entitled victims to mental health professionals during court proceedings and the use of audiovisual technology for remote testimony, but many courts lacked the capabilities to deploy these resources and many judges continued to require victims to appear in front of their trafficker in court, causing re-traumatization. Observers reported judges lacked sensitivity and an understanding of the impact of psychological trauma on victims' ability to consistently and clearly relate the circumstances of their exploitation and inappropriately dismissed as unreliable victim testimony. The law provided for witness protection and non-disclosure of the witness' personal information; however, observers reported no trafficking victims had received full witness protection privileges to date and courts sometimes revealed victims' identities during proceedings. The law entitled victims to file civil suits against traffickers for compensation but no victims to date had received compensation or received restitution from their traffickers. The government reported trafficking victims had never applied for compensation.

## **PREVENTION**

The government increased efforts to prevent trafficking. The Office of the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking (ONRHT) continued to coordinate government wide anti-trafficking efforts despite lacking sufficient resources. The government monitored anti-trafficking efforts but did not have a national action plan and did not make assessments publicly available. ONRHT continued the development of a national database for trafficking statistics. ONRHT organized and funded its third

national two-day anti-trafficking awareness festival and signed a memorandum of cooperation with a network of businesses to promote forced labor free supply chains through awareness raising activities. The government held awareness raising events for public transportation staff and passengers and provided airtime for free public service announcements for NGOs and government agencies on trafficking issues. In March 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Greece failed to protect 42 Bangladeshi victims on a strawberry farm near the town of Manolada in a forced labor case in 2013. The court ordered Greece to pay each of the applicants who had participated in the proceedings between €16,360 and €20,360 (\$19,640 and \$24,440). The government continued efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex and forced labor.

### **TRAFFICKING PROFILE**

As reported over the past five years, Greece is a destination, transit, and, to a limited extent, source country for women and children subjected to sex trafficking and men, women, and children subjected to forced labor. Some women and children from Eastern and Southern Europe, South Asia, Russia, Nigeria, and China are subjected to sex trafficking in unlicensed brothels, on the street, in strip clubs, in massage salons, and in hotels. Victims of forced labor in Greece are primarily children and men from Eastern Europe, South Asia, and Africa. Migrant workers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are susceptible to debt bondage, reportedly in agriculture. Economically marginalized Romani children from Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania are forced to sell goods on the street, beg, or commit petty theft in Greece. The increase in unaccompanied child migrants in Greece has increased the number of children susceptible to exploitation. Some public officials have been investigated for suspected involvement in human trafficking. Unaccompanied children, primarily from Afghanistan, engage in survival sex and are vulnerable to trafficking. Recruiters target migrants in refugee camps from their own countries. Most migrants and asylum-seekers are believed to rely on smugglers at some point during their journey and in some instances are forced into exploitation upon arrival in Greece.