

## **Request for information about human Trafficking in your Country and your work in this field**

### **US State Department 'Trafficking in Persons Report June 2016'**

*(this is the most recent data available)*

#### **IRELAND**

Ireland is a destination and source country for women, men, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor—including forced criminal activity. Foreign trafficking victims identified in Ireland are from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. During the reporting period, Irish law enforcement reported an increase in suspected victims of forced labor, forced criminal activity, and forced begging from Eastern Europe, particularly Romania, as well as an increase in potential sex trafficking victims from Brazil. Authorities reported a decrease in suspected victims from Nigeria. Irish children are subjected to sex trafficking within the country. The Government of Ireland fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. During the reporting period, the government increased investigations of trafficking crimes, although it has not convicted a trafficker under the 2008 anti-trafficking law since 2013. However, law enforcement's continued failure to identify suspected victims of forced criminal activity and their subsequent prosecution and imprisonment within the Irish court system remained serious concern.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IRELAND**

Implement the trafficking law to ensure sex and labor traffickers are held accountable through convictions and dissuasive sentences; increase efforts to identify and protect victims of labor trafficking and forced criminality, ensuring victims are not penalized for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking; establish multi-stakeholder case reviews during the victim identification process.

#### **PROSECUTION**

The government sustained efforts to investigate trafficking offenses, but has not convicted any labor or sex traffickers under the 2008 anti-trafficking act since 2013. The law broadly defines sexual exploitation, including the sexual abuse of children, and conflates possession or creation of child pornography with human trafficking, making it inconsistent with the 2000 UN TIP Protocol. Section 5 of the 2008 act criminalizes soliciting or importuning a person subjected to trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. Authorities initiated investigations of 91 new trafficking-related cases in 2015, an increase from 79 in 2014. Four of the investigations were closed and the government will not prosecute them due to various factors, including lack of evidence, lack of cooperation from witnesses, and unidentified suspects.

#### **PROTECTION**

The government maintained victim protection efforts. The national referral mechanism required victims be referred to law enforcement before shelter, health, and legal services could be provided. Authorities identified 78 suspected trafficking victims in 2015, compared with 46 in 2014. Victims included 22 children, of which 15 were Irish; 22 victims from Romania; 13 from Nigeria; and the rest from Eastern Europe, Africa, and South Asia; 52 were female, 25 were male, and one was transgender; 48 were potentially exploited in sex trafficking; 28 were exploited in labor trafficking. Authorities did not report how many suspected victims they ultimately confirmed as trafficking victims. NGOs reported the continued lack of an effective mechanism to identify victims inhibited victims from receiving adequate protection, assistance, and witness preparation, and claimed the standard of proof for victim identification was too high. The law did not protect victims from prosecution for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. NGOs reported that if the government prosecuted victims for crimes they committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking before their identification as victims, their criminal record could not be expunged following formal identification. NGOs continued to report the government prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned Asian victims of forced labor in cannabis production for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking.

#### **PREVENTION**

The government strengthened its anti-trafficking prevention efforts. The justice ministry's anti-trafficking unit coordinated interagency efforts, including the high-level interagency group and five working groups that included NGOs. NGOs called for the working groups to resume meeting on a regular schedule. The government introduced a bill to criminalize the purchase of commercial sex, and classified the purchase of sex from a trafficking victim as a more serious offense. Authorities and NGOs completed an awareness-raising campaign on sex trafficking. The government conducted anti-trafficking trainings on supply chain issues for employees of a food production company. NGOs advocated for an independent national rapporteur to monitor government anti-trafficking efforts. The government required all locally engaged staff of diplomats to have contracts in compliance with local labor law; NGOs recommended the government extend these measures to service staff employed by diplomats. The government provided anti-trafficking training to its diplomatic personnel and defense forces prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions.

#### Work in Field

In Ireland because of my full time work in the VPSJ my efforts to prevent and reduce the trafficking of people is limited to:

1. Poverty reduction in Ireland
2. Membership of APT

The Purpose of APT is twofold

- To raise awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons
- To work in collaboration with others for the prevention of the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.

To achieve this purpose, APT does the following:

- Focuses on developing links with networks of religious in countries of origin of victims and countries of destination
- Networks with other similarly committed organisations and action groups, nationally and internationally
- Looks for ways to raise public awareness of the issue by offering presentations about human trafficking to schools, parishes and groups
- Lobbies politically for just and effective legislation
- Seeks ways to protect the rights of victims of trafficking
- Works with other groups to address the issue of demand for purchased sex, which fuels the trade in human trafficking
- Prays and encourages others to pray for those trafficked, for traffickers and for an end to this great violation of human rights.