



The 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Efforts and Opportunities

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The U.S. Department of State recently released their [2022 Trafficking in Persons \(TIP\)](#) report, the most comprehensive, annual resource ranking countries' anti-trafficking efforts, detailing inspiring stories of advocates, and highlighting leading best practices—including the crucial role of local organizations and communities.

Human trafficking remains an extensive, serious threat to freedom globally and in the United States

An estimated 25 million people are currently victims of human trafficking, with over 90,000 individuals identified in 2021 prosecuted cases. Sadly, 18 countries committed worse human trafficking violations from previous years, even engaging in state sponsored human trafficking and recruitment of child soldiers.

American anti-trafficking efforts continue to expand, but needed improvements remain

The U.S. federal government investigated nearly 2,000 human trafficking cases, targeted online platforms used by sex traffickers, passed laws penalizing federal officers coercing sexual acts from people in their custody, and improved efforts to stop imports made with forced labor.

Yet, human traffickers exploit victims in every American territory across industries, targeting in particular those who experience discrimination and vulnerabilities such as homelessness and immigration status. Increasingly, victims are exploited by family or intimate partners and recruited and advertised on social media.

Though increasing the number of victims served, *the pandemic has spurred both an increase in trafficking and the costs of providing services*—leaving many advocates without enough funding. Further, law enforcement continues to arrest survivors for their trafficking and the government struggles to identify and offer specialized services to labor trafficking victims or hold their traffickers accountable.

Best practices and recommendations to prevent trafficking and serve victims

- *Survivors must increasingly inform and drive the anti-human trafficking network.* Governments and nonprofits have increasingly listened to, empowered, and partnered with survivors, and should continue to properly compensate survivors for their work, create victim-centered and

trauma-informed policies and programs, use ethical storytelling that respects survivors' autonomy, and include survivor leadership.

- • *Leveraging data to fight trafficking.* Improved data collection is helping advocates to better track cases, allocate resources, and measure the effectiveness of anti-trafficking policies. Progress requires continued information and technology integration across private and public sectors.
- • *Ending the penalization of victims.* It is crucial for policymakers in all states to cease prosecuting victims for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit, and instead offer restitution and record expungement to victims.
- • *Improving accountability in labor supply chains.* Governments must help businesses diligently address the exploitation that occurs within their supply chains.
- • *Improving access to housing and specialized services for all victims.* The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing housing constraints, leaving survivors with few emergency, transitional, or long-term housing options.
- • *Combating national complicity in domestic and international corruption.* The private sector can help combat corruption by contributing digital expertise and developing effective internal measures to prevent and detect bribery and trafficking within supply chains.

The indispensable role of collaboration locally and across sectors

The 2022 TIP report demonstrates that human trafficking prevention thrives—and survivors achieve life-long freedom—through comprehensive collaboration. Nonprofits can lead this charge by both empowering the voice of survivors and offering the long-term housing desperately needed in every community. Similarly, the report identified how employers can offer skills

training, employment, and competitive wages to help propel survivors to self-sustainability.

Lastly, the global human trafficking trends demonstrate the promise of partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. From advisory councils to trainings that drive effective anti-trafficking policies and organizational frameworks, advocates must join with businesses, local government, community leaders, and local supporters to bring freedom and restoration to all. Across the globe and locally, the TIP report shows powerful partnerships and widespread responsible action can counteract human trafficking—so every person has a chance at a free, safe, flourishing life.