



[Third Annual Trafficking in Persons Report MACEDONIA \(FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF\) \(Tier 1\)](#)

Macedonia is a country of transit and destination for women and children trafficked for prostitution from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, notably Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria. Some victims remain in Macedonia, while others are trafficked to Albania, Kosovo or Italy.

The Government of Macedonia fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government showed increasingly effective law enforcement activities in ethnic-Albanian areas not under government control during the 2001 conflict, and in areas where trafficking activity is prevalent. As a post-conflict country with limited resources, it focused significant efforts on combating trafficking. The low conviction rate relative to arrests emerged as an area of concern and numerous press and public reports were published questioning the integrity of members of the judiciary. Efforts should continue in the next year to strengthen the judiciary's capacity to enforce rule of law.

Prevention

The government co-sponsored with IOM and local NGOs several preventive events, including a public awareness campaign for the public at large, and a focused campaign in the country's third largest city. The inter-ministerial National Anti-Trafficking Committee, headed by the Ministry of Interior State Secretary, oversees implementation of the National Action Plan. The government instituted a new policy on issuance of work permits, whereby a centralized policy review board approves all work permit requests. Requests for permits for dancers and waitresses are given strict review and most are denied. The government continues to participate actively in Stability Pact regional ministerial meetings and capacity-building programs.

Prosecution

Criminal articles on organized and forced prostitution are used to prohibit and punish trafficking in persons. During the reporting period, courts handed down 11 convictions, ranging from six months to seven years. Police increased the ability to investigate and arrest traffickers in areas of previously limited government control, and the government filed over 70 trafficking-related charges against over 100 perpetrators. The government arrested and prosecuted notorious trafficking kingpin Dilaver Bojku and two associates. For activities conducted before enactment of the current anti-trafficking legislation, the applicable criminal article held only a maximum penalty of one year; the court handed Bojku a six-month sentence in Ohrid Jail, He was transferred to a prison halfway house, during which time the Ministry of Interior

secured additional trafficking charges against him and extended his detention, pending trial. The government routinely cooperates with neighboring countries through its Southeastern Cooperative Initiative (SECI) liaison and through its bilateral cooperation agreements with UN authorities in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro and Bulgaria. Government efforts to crack down on corruption continued, and several internal investigations are ongoing. In 2003, charges were brought against a local police official on trafficking and other charges, and the case is proceeding through the court system.

Protection

Police routinely place victims found during anti-trafficking raids in the government's transit shelter for trafficking victims. Once the victims are in the transitional shelter, a local NGO conducts interviews, and they are offered repatriation, counseling, medical and other support services through IOM. During the reporting period, 292 foreign female victims were processed through the shelter, of whom 23 were under 18. Victims of trafficking in Macedonia do not receive temporary residency status. While the government was working to enact a witness protection law and program, the police and IOM provided ad hoc witness protection for some witnesses willing to testify. Police and prosecutors receive training on trafficking.

