

# Norway - United States Department of State

## NORWAY: Tier 1

The Government of Norway fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period; therefore Norway remained on Tier 1. These efforts included prosecuting more trafficking cases, allocating more funding to an NGO for victim assistance, awarding a sex trafficking victim compensation for non-pecuniary damages, and cooperating with foreign governments to target anti-trafficking programs, such as securing supply chains in selected industries. Although the government meets the minimum standards, police reported fewer trafficking cases and courts convicted fewer traffickers. For the third consecutive year, the government did not report an official number of identified and assisted victims. Furthermore, the government continued to lack formal identification procedures and a national referral mechanism (NRM).

## PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increase efforts to vigorously investigate and prosecute sex trafficking and labor trafficking cases and effectively convict traffickers under the trafficking statute. • Enhance efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims, particularly children, and screen foreigner nationals and asylum-seekers for indicators of trafficking prior to their deportation. • Collect and annually report data on the number of victims identified and assisted by the government. • Complete the development of and implement a comprehensive statistical system, including data on child trafficking, victim identification and assistance, victim compensation, and investigations, prosecutions, and convictions. • Develop and implement a comprehensive NRM and victim identification procedures that receive adequate input from NGOs and define processes and roles of all relevant government agencies and front-line actors. • Improve efforts to understand the forced labor market and identify victims of labor trafficking. • Increase training for investigators and prosecutors on applying trafficking laws and understanding different aspects of trafficking. • Conduct public awareness campaigns on trafficking that target vulnerable populations.

## PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts. Sections 257 and 258 of the penal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to six years' imprisonment for offenses involving adult victims and up to 10 years' imprisonment for those involving child victims. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with penalties for other serious crimes, such as rape. Police reported investigating 36 trafficking cases (14 sex trafficking, 15 labor trafficking, and seven unknown), compared with

45 trafficking cases (24 sex trafficking, 18 labor trafficking, and three unconfirmed) in 2018. The government reported 19 concluded prosecutions, compared with 13 in 2018. Authorities convicted four traffickers for sex trafficking, compared with 13 traffickers (12 forced labor, which was the result of a high-profile 2016 case, and one sex trafficking) in 2018. All of the convicted traffickers received prison sentences, ranging from 18 months to five years' imprisonment. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in trafficking offenses.

Officials noted they did not have a good overview of the forced labor market and there was a need for increased efforts to detect and prosecute forced labor cases, as most resulted in social dumping cases in court. The government defined social dumping as the act of offering foreign workers unacceptably low wages and unreasonable working conditions, such as working hours and living quarters, compared with what Norwegian workers normally got. Experts reported prosecutors and investigators tended to charge traffickers with non-trafficking crimes, such as narcotics and pimping, but noted enhanced police awareness and willingness to pursue trafficking cases. During the reporting period, the Coordination Unit for Victims of Trafficking (KOM) hosted a seminar focusing on labor exploitation with 90 participants. KOM also conducted a second seminar on cooperation in criminal cases and challenges balancing the need to protect and offer assistance to victims with the detection, investigation, and prosecution of traffickers, which garnered 150 participants from a wide range of sectors working on trafficking issues. The Norwegian Police Academy developed an online mandatory course with a module on trafficking to increase knowledge and awareness about trafficking-related offenses.

## PROTECTION

The government maintained protection efforts. In 2019, the government delayed development of its comprehensive countrywide statistical system on trafficking, including victim identification and assistance data, which commenced in 2017. Subsequently, for the third consecutive year, the government did not report an official number of victims it identified or assisted. However, the government estimated it identified 100 victims in 2019 (the last reported official statistic was 262 victims identified and assisted in 2016). Additionally, government-funded civil society organizations reported identifying 126 victims and assisting 238 presumed victims in 2019. Officials noted double counting likely occurred across organizations. NGOs reported the shift toward online prostitution made identifying sex trafficking victims more difficult. Furthermore, experts noted deficiencies in identifying labor trafficking victims. Although the government had neither formal identification procedures nor a NRM, authorities utilized informal guidelines to identify and refer potential victims. The government began to develop a NRM and assigned the task to the Labor and Welfare Administration Agency. However, experts expressed concern that the labor agency had minimal experience and knowledge in dealing with trafficking victims and trends in general. Experts also expressed concern the proposed NRM would reduce the reflection period for victims from six months to 45 days, which could result in fewer victims assisting authorities in investigations and authorities deporting more victims while they were still recovering from their abuse. Consequently, the government delayed development of the NRM.

The government provided victim assistance through municipal crisis centers and government-funded NGOs, including

Re-establishment, Organizing safe places to stay, Security, Assistance (ROSA), the largest project exclusively assisting trafficking victims in Norway. These NGOs provided foreign and domestic victims with shelter, legal aid, stipends for food, psychological care, medical assistance, fitness facilities, and Norwegian language classes. Parliament allocated 30 million kroner (\$3.42 million) to NGOs specifically for assistance services, the same amount as in 2018 (20 million kroner—\$2.28 million—in 2017). ROSA received 3.1 million kroner (\$352,990) in government funding, compared with 2.9 million kroner (\$330,220) in 2018. The Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs established a coordinating unit to provide service and assistance to child trafficking victims. Authorities placed child victims in state-run institutions, such as orphanages, for up to six months. Municipal child welfare services assisted three potential child victims, a decrease from eight in 2018. According to officials, authorities struggled to identify child trafficking victims and maintain statistics. The law provided foreign victims the same access to care as domestic victims and residency to those who testified in a criminal case that was prosecuted as a trafficking case. In 2019, the government began revisions to the law, proposing that victims who testify may be considered eligible for residency without the requirement of the case being prosecuted as a trafficking case. While NGOs welcomed improvements to the law, they criticized the government for suggesting that a victim “may” be eligible for residency, stating that a victim should automatically be eligible when contributing to a criminal case. In 2019, authorities granted four residence permits for victims testifying in trafficking cases. Authorities granted a six-month reflection period to five victims and limited residence permits of up to 12 months to 14 victims, compared with 13 and 11, respectively, in 2018. Authorities granted six possible victims residence permits due to compelling humanitarian considerations (two in 2018). Observers raised concerns over the police’s focus on lack of residence permits and immigration relief, resulting in the deportation of victims without screening for trafficking indicators. Additionally, the continued closure of the Storskog border crossing with Russia to anyone seeking protection prevented the screening for victims of trafficking along the northern border. The government awarded a sex trafficking victim 200,000 kroner (\$22,770) in compensation for non-pecuniary damages.

## PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts. Norway continued to implement measures from its national action plan. KOM published an annual report providing an overview on victim identification, challenges relating to trafficking, and relevant agencies’ anti-trafficking activities. For the fourth consecutive year, the government did not fund any information campaigns targeted toward potential trafficking victims. In 2018, the Norwegian Minister of International Development signed a three-year agreement and committed 100 million kroner (\$11.39 million) in cooperation with the United States, other governments, and private donors, to target programs, such as securing supply chains in selected industries, in coordination under the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. ROSA managed a 24-hour hotline for potential trafficking victims and noted an increase in calls from potential labor trafficking victims. Two calls resulted in investigations. Parliament allocated 1.7 million kroner (\$193,580) in grants to ROSA for the hotline and other victim assistance activities, compared with 3.68 million kroner (\$419,040) in 2018.

## TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Norway, and, to a lesser extent, traffickers exploit victims from Norway abroad. Trafficking victims identified in Norway primarily originate from Eastern and Southern Europe, such as Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine, with the vast majority being adult women exploited in sex trafficking. Additionally, reports indicate an increase in victims from South America, especially Brazil and Colombia. Traffickers exploit women and girls in sex trafficking and men and women in labor trafficking, specifically in domestic service and construction. Traffickers subject children to forced criminal activities, such as begging, and other forms of forced labor, including illegal employment in car washes and private housekeeping.