

shelter specifically for foreign victims, regardless of gender or age. There were no other specialized shelters for male victims; therefore, the government often placed male victims in other government-funded shelters or in hotels for temporary housing. NGOs reported a need for long-term housing, skills training and employment, childcare, legal assistance, and financial assistance for victims after testifying in court cases. Foreign victims had the same access to care as Argentine nationals; however, victims were sometimes unaware of available services. Authorities reported 80 foreign victims received assistance during the reporting period, with roughly half being minors. The government did not report the number of victims who received repatriation assistance. The Ministry of Justice received approximately 199.7 million Argentine pesos (\$10.4 million) to support victims' assistance activities. Authorities, including SENNAE, organized 64 training courses, reaching 8,136 individuals, including officials, members of civil society, students, teachers, and health professionals.

The government encouraged the participation of victims in trials of their traffickers by assisting victims throughout the initial testimony and during any subsequent appearances. The Rescue Program provided tribunals with reports on the psychological state of victims and what requirements they might have to assist in the prosecution of their traffickers. Other support for victim testimony included the possibility of video testimony and the use of recorded testimony. It was unclear how many victims received such assistance during the reporting period. There were no reports of identified victims jailed or penalized for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their being subjected to trafficking. Victims can file for restitution by bringing civil suits against traffickers. There were limited examples of success under this procedure, and the government conducted outreach and drafted policies during the reporting period to improve best practices on both topics.

## PREVENTION

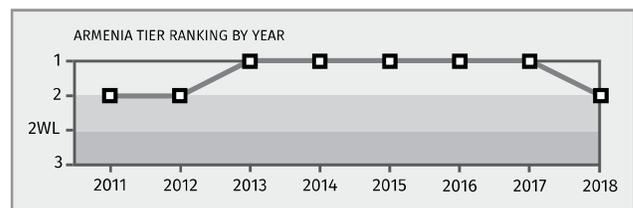
The government maintained prevention efforts. In March 2017, the Federal Council on human trafficking, which included federal government entities, provincial officials, civil society, and a smaller executive council that implemented the initiatives of the federal council, held its first full meeting with all participants and established victim assistance as an explicit mandate. Despite these efforts, NGOs advocated for improved interagency coordination, specifically on victim assistance. The government continued drafting a national action plan, with input from the federal council. The government launched a new campaign to increase public awareness of trafficking indicators and to encourage the public to report cases of potential trafficking. Some provincial governments undertook prevention efforts, such as awareness campaigns focused on advertising the national hotline, yet NGOs reported concerns with an alleged decrease in large-scale prevention campaigns over the reporting period. NGOs and municipal authorities continued to express concern about child sex tourism, although there were no reported investigations or prosecutions related to this crime. The government continued proactive efforts to register informal workers and employers in rural areas and investigate non-compliance with labor laws; yet civil society reported a decrease in labor inspections in rural areas. PROTEX continued operating the national hotline system with response assistance from the Rescue Program. The government made efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex, but not for forced labor. Argentine troops received anti-trafficking training prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping operations.

## TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Argentina is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Argentine women and children are subjected to sex trafficking within the country, as are women and children from other Latin American countries, particularly Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Brazil. To a more limited extent, Argentine men, women, and children are subjected to sex and labor trafficking in other countries, mostly in Europe. Transgender Argentines are exploited in sex trafficking within the country and in Western Europe. Men, women, and children from Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, and other countries are subjected to forced labor in a variety of sectors, including sweatshops, agriculture, street vending, charcoal and brick production, domestic work, and small businesses. Chinese citizens working in supermarkets are vulnerable to debt bondage. Official complicity, mainly at the sub-national levels, continues to hinder the government's efforts to combat trafficking. In 2016, the Municipality of Ushuaia was ordered to pay restitution to a victim after being found complicit of facilitating trafficking by failing to adequately regulate brothels.

## ARMENIA: TIER 2

The Government of Armenia does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government made significant efforts to meet the minimum standards during the reporting period by providing robust training for law enforcement, initiating slightly more prosecutions, and organizing various awareness campaigns. However, these efforts were not serious and sustained compared to the efforts during the previous reporting period. The government did not proactively identify victims or conduct proactive investigations and relied on victims to self-identify; the number of victims identified decreased compared to the previous reporting period. Authorities dropped most cases categorized as trafficking by local police due to a lack of evidence and first responders did not use uniform indicators to screen vulnerable populations. Investigators repeatedly interrogated victims, including children, and victims always appeared in front of their traffickers in court; risking re-traumatization. International organizations reported cases of child labor and child abuse in state childcare institutions, and noted the institutions lacked measures to prevent the exploitation of children. The government continued to suspend the majority of labor inspectorate functions, hindering regular inspections that had the potential to identify forced labor; no labor inspections were conducted during the reporting period. Therefore Armenia was downgraded to Tier 2.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARMENIA

Vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers under Articles 132 and 132-2; establish and implement preventative

measures for child labor and potential child trafficking in state child care institutions; increase efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims; develop standard operating procedures for screening trafficking victims and train officials on screening for trafficking among individuals in prostitution, migrants, refugees, and other at-risk populations; proactively investigate all potential trafficking offenses, even those complaints filed by victims that do not specifically mention trafficking; train investigators, prosecutors, and judges on victim-centered approaches to trafficking cases, including for children, and provide advanced training on trafficking investigations and prosecutions; allow labor inspectors to conduct regular inspections and identify victims through unannounced visits; establish formal procedures for repatriating trafficking victims from abroad, including measures to cover logistical costs; license, regulate, and educate local employment agencies and agents so they can help prevent the forced labor of Armenians abroad; work with Russian authorities to identify Armenian forced labor victims and prosecute labor traffickers; work with NGOs to find ways to identify and assist Armenian victims in Turkey; and approve legislation to establish victim-witness protection measures.

## PROSECUTION

The government decreased law enforcement efforts. Articles 132 and 132-2 of the criminal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of five to eight years imprisonment, which were sufficiently stringent, and with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The government investigated six cases (16 in 2016). Of these, two cases were sex trafficking and four were forced labor (five cases of sex trafficking, 10 of forced labor, and one case of both sex trafficking and forced labor in 2016). The government prosecuted three defendants (one in 2016); one for sex trafficking, one for forced begging, and one for forced labor. Courts convicted one sex trafficker (three sex traffickers in 2016). The trafficker received 12 years imprisonment.

Observers reported the Investigative Committee (IC) or Prosecutor General's Office dropped most cases categorized as trafficking by local police due to a lack of evidence. Local investigators lacked the skills to properly interview victims, especially children; however, the IC set up child-friendly interview rooms in five regional divisions. Law enforcement investigated only formal criminal complaints filed by victims that specifically alleged trafficking and did not proactively investigate criminal activity that potentially involved trafficking. As a result, law enforcement initiated investigations only when victims self-identified. The government trained 320 prosecutors, 327 investigators from the IC, and 540 employees from penitentiary institutions on trafficking issues. The government trained 119 officials working on juvenile investigations and 21 investigators from the IC on child trafficking issues. The government also trained 174 civil servants on fighting official complicity. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking. Prosecution of forced labor cases involving Russia remained a challenge, where Armenian investigators continued to face difficulties collaborating with law enforcement. Similarly, the absence of diplomatic relations with Turkey continued to hinder law enforcement and victim protection efforts for cases involving Turkey.

## PROTECTION

The government decreased protection efforts. The government identified 13 victims (22 in 2016). Of these, eight were subjected to sex trafficking and five to forced labor (three sex trafficking and 19 forced labor in 2016); two were children in both 2016 and 2017; 10 were females and three were males (five females and 17 males in 2016). Experts reported an absence of proactive identification and the government relied on victims to self-identify. First responders did not use uniform indicators to screen vulnerable populations. The government provided temporary shelter, emergency medical aid, and psychological aid to potential trafficking victims during the "pre-identification stage," a stage where the government collected information on the potential victim within a maximum of 10 days. The Victim Identification Commission (VIC), comprised of national and local government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations, officially recognized victims based on information collected during the "pre-identification stage". NGOs reported positive cooperation with the government and that the referral procedures functioned well.

The government allocated 19,068,600 drams (\$39,320) for victim protection efforts, including operational costs for an NGO-run shelter, compared to 18,846,000 drams (\$38,860) in 2016. The government and local NGOs jointly provided victims legal, medical, and psychological assistance; housing; one-time monetary compensation of 250,000 drams (\$515); and access to social, educational, and employment projects. The government also offered free health care but relied on NGOs to provide legal assistance, including the cost for attorneys. Two victims received health care (one in 2016) and nine victims received legal assistance. The government maintained a cooperation agreement and partially funded one specialized NGO-run shelter to provide services to victims; the NGO-run shelter assisted 19 newly-identified victims (19 in 2016), and 36 victims in total. The NGO-run shelter required adult victims to notify staff when they left shelters unescorted, but victims were free to leave if they no longer wanted assistance. Services were available to female and male victims, but male victims did not have access to a shelter. The NGO-run shelter and childcare institutions accommodated child victims. However, GRETA and OSCE reported cases of child labor and child abuse in state childcare institutions; staff at state childcare institutions considered child labor to be normal. The law designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate repatriation of Armenian victims from abroad, but observers reported difficulties in repatriations due to a lack of established procedures and funds to cover logistical costs; the government repatriated three victims (11 in 2016).

Authorities did not make victim assistance contingent on victim cooperation with law enforcement and afforded foreign victims the same rights and services as Armenian citizens. The government did not penalize trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. Observers reported law enforcement officers in remote areas lacked information and training to inform victims of their rights to protection or assistance. Victims hesitated to assist in prosecutions due to a lack of confidentiality in public testimonies, creating a fear of retaliation from traffickers and stigmatization from their family and community. Authorities did not protect victims' rights during court proceedings, including children; investigators repeatedly interrogated victims and victims always appeared in front of their traffickers in court, risking re-traumatization. The government continued to lack a formal victim-witness protection program. The government adopted a decree in 2016 that provided witness protection specifically to trafficking victims. Victims were legally entitled

to obtain restitution during criminal proceedings or through a separate civil suit. Victims did not file any civil suits; however, in previous years, judges had not issued damages in civil suits, asserting that victims did not substantiate the financial damages they had suffered. The law allowed investigators to place defendants' property in custody to fund potential civil claims, but this rarely occurred in practice.

## PREVENTION

The government maintained prevention efforts. The Anti-trafficking Ministerial Council and the Interagency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons continued to implement the 2016-2018 national action plan (NAP) and published semi-annual and annual reports of its activities. Observers reported the government did not monitor for progress or assess the impact and outcomes of the NAP. There was no mechanism for oversight and regulation of labor recruitment agencies. As a result of a legal change suspending most labor inspectorate functions in July 2015, inspectors were unable to conduct regular inspections and identify indications of forced labor. The Ministry of Health formed the Health Inspection Body (HIB), but their mandate was limited to workplace health and safety inspections and did not have authority to conduct unannounced inspections; HIB was still recruiting inspectors and did not conduct any inspections during the reporting period. The government held awareness-raising discussion at schools and campaigns targeting students and teachers. The Ministry of Diaspora distributed informative materials on the risks of trafficking to individuals crossing the border, as well as Armenians residing in the Middle East and European countries. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs aired a trafficking program on television and government agencies posted trafficking information on their websites, including information on hotlines operated by police and NGOs; the government did not report the number of calls. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts or forced labor.

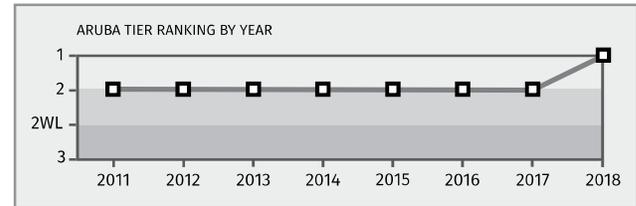
## TRAFFICKING PROFILE

Armenia is a source and, to a lesser extent, destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex and labor trafficking. Armenians are subjected to labor trafficking in Russia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Turkey; Armenian women and children are subjected to sex trafficking in the UAE and Turkey. Armenian women and children are subjected to sex and labor trafficking and forced begging within the country. Some children work in agriculture, construction, and service provision within the country, where they are vulnerable to labor trafficking. Men in rural areas with little education and children staying in childcare institutions remain highly vulnerable to trafficking.

## ARUBA: TIER 1<sup>†</sup>

The Government of Aruba fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government made key achievements to do so during the reporting period; therefore Aruba was upgraded to Tier 1. These achievements included

identifying and assisting more victims, prosecuting five individuals and convicting two traffickers—the first since 2013, approving the 2018-2022 national action plan, and establishing a specialized investigatory police unit. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it did not dedicate a budget for victim protection efforts or fund the implementation of the national action plan.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARUBA

Allocate sufficient resources to enable the national anti-trafficking task force and national coordinator to implement the 2018-2022 national action plan and all anti-trafficking efforts; vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses; punish traffickers with prison sentences to deter the crime; implement guidelines for proactive victim identification and referral of possible trafficking victims among Venezuelan migrants and asylum-seekers; train officials on the use of the newly adopted referral mechanism; proactively identify trafficking victims among all vulnerable groups, including women in prostitution, those who hold adult entertainment visas, domestic workers, and migrants working in construction, supermarkets, and retail; continue to provide information to all migrant workers arriving in Aruba on their rights and resources for assistance; formalize agreements with local NGOs and private sector accommodations to shelter adult and child victims; and finalize the implementation strategy for the construction of the multifaceted shelter for victims of crimes, including trafficking.

## PROSECUTION

The government increased prosecution efforts to combat trafficking. Articles 2:239, 2:240, and 2:241 of the penal code criminalized sex and labor trafficking. Penalties ranged from eight to 18 years imprisonment or a fine of 25,000 to 100,000 florins (\$14,040 to \$56,180). These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The Human Trafficking and Smuggling Unit (UMM), which became operational in 2017, investigated seven cases for alleged forced labor in 2017, compared with six trafficking investigations in 2016 and one in 2015. The government prosecuted five individuals (two for sex trafficking and three for forced labor) and convicted two traffickers whose sentence ranged from 21 to 22 months imprisonment. Between 2014-2016, the government did not initiate any prosecutions or convict any traffickers. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses. The government trained 500 law enforcement officials on trafficking indicators. At the Interpol Conference on Human Trafficking in the Caribbean, the Aruban authorities trained officials in the region on best practices.

<sup>†</sup> Aruba is an autonomous entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. For the purpose of this report, Aruba is not a "country" to which the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act apply. This narrative reflects how Aruba would be assessed if it were a separate, independent country.