

Topic: Human Trafficking

Country: Republic of Belarus

Trafficking in human beings is a global issue. Like many countries, the Republic of Belarus has been hit hard by Human Trafficking. Sex trafficking is one of the main concern of Belarus, being a source destination and transit country for prostitution, mainly concerning women and children. Belarusian women are most likely to be exported to Western European countries but also to Russia and the middle East. Men are also trafficking victims, the large majority being subjected to labor exploitation primarily in Belarus and Russia as well as in Poland, Turkey and some other countries.

Belarus was one of the first countries that initiated national consultations on Global Compact on Migration, which includes combatting human trafficking among its priorities. To that end, Belarus put forward in 2005 an idea of forging a Global Partnership against Slavery and Trafficking in Human Beings in the 21st century that would unite efforts and best practices of all major stakeholders, actively involved in trafficking in persons issues, and foster a concerted UN response to this heinous crime.

As a first step towards the Global Partnership, Belarus initiated the resolution “Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons”, which was adopted by consensus at the 61st UN session of the General Assembly in 2006 (A/res/61/180). Then, at the 63rd and 64th sessions of the UN General Assembly in 2008 (A/res/63/194) and 2009 (A/res/64/178) respectively, the resolutions on the same issue reconfirmed importance in promoting better anti-trafficking cooperation globally. Up until now Belarus continued his efforts and cooperation with other countries in order to eliminate Human Trafficking and continues to host international conferences that define human trafficking as a concern and outline actions for combatting these problems in Belarus and overseas.

In the Republic of Belarus actions against trafficking in persons has been set as a priority of national policy. The Republic of Belarus has made some efforts in order to reduce the the Trafficking taking place within its borders. Particularly, the government conducted public awareness campaigns through television, radio, and print media and provided in-kind assistance to NGOs’ campaigns in the form of advertising hotlines, production assistance, and placement of awareness-raising materials on state-owned television, radio, and billboards. The government also maintained victim protection efforts as well

However according to the TIP report of 2018 issued by the United States, Belarus has been classified as Tier 3 showing that Belarus did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and more measures and effort were to be put in action. The TIP report reproaches Belarus for the lack of conviction of traffickers in the last six years as well as maintaining policies compelling the forced labor of its citizen.

The TIP recommends to reform state policies subjecting citizens to forced labor and continue to increase efforts in investigating and prosecuting forced labor and sex trafficking as well as investing in assistance and protection systems for victims of traffic.

The government of Belarus needs to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes under the trafficking statute and actively perpetuates its efforts in order to eliminate Human Trafficking.