

## Mauritius



**Population:** 1,303,717 (July 2011 est.)  
**Population Growth Rate:** 0.729% (2011 est.)  
**Birth Rate:** 13.97 births/1,000 population (2011 est.)  
**Life Expectancy:** total population: 74.48 years; male: 71.01 years; female: 78.12 years (2011 est.)  
**Literacy Rate:** total population: 84.4%; male: 88.4%; female: 80.5% (2000 est.)  
**Net Migration Rate:** -0.0 migrants/1,000 population (2011 est.)  
**Unemployment Rate:** 7.5% (2010 est.)  
**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$13,500 (2010 est.)  
**Religions:** Hindu 48%, Roman Catholic 23.6%, Muslim 16.6%, other Christian 8.6%, other 2.5%, unspecified 0.3%, none 0.4%  
**Languages:** Creole 80.5%, Bhojpuri 12.1%, French 3.4%, other 3.7%, unspecified 0.3%; official language is English, spoken by less than 1% of the population (2000 census)  
**Ethnic Groups:** Indo-Mauritian 68%, Creole 27%, Sino-Mauritian 3%, Franco-Mauritian 2%  
**Capital:** Port Louis<sup>1</sup>

### Trafficking Routes

Mauritius is a source country for trafficking in persons domestically, as well as to other states.<sup>2</sup> The government recognizes the increasing number of children involved in the sex industry.<sup>3</sup> Young girls are coerced into prostitution by close friends and family, and are sometimes tempted with the promise of a different employment opportunity.<sup>4</sup>

### Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Poverty, broken families, domestic violence, unemployment, school dropout levels, drug addiction, rape, engagement of mothers in prostitution, as well as sexual

<sup>1</sup> CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK (2011), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mp.html>.

<sup>2</sup> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010 - Mauritius*, 14 June 2010. Available at:

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c1883da3c.html> [accessed 9 March 2011]

<sup>3</sup> The Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection, Intervention on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Child Protection (Amendment) Bill 2005, May 12, 2005. Available at: [http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/women/file/intervention\\_minister051205.doc](http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/women/file/intervention_minister051205.doc).

<sup>4</sup> *Supra* note 2.

abuse and incest—mostly by fathers and other close relations—are causes that lead to the commercial and sexual exploitation of children in Mauritius.<sup>5</sup> Close links have been drawn between the abandonment and abduction of children and child trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

### Forms of Trafficking

Sex trafficking among children has been the most highly reported issue in Mauritius. There have also been reports of migrant workers in Mauritius having their passports taken, being paid much lower wages than promised, if paid at all, and being prevented from speaking out about their conditions.<sup>7</sup>

### Government Responses

In 2009, the government passed the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2009, thereby allowing for penalties of up to 15 years' incarceration for trafficking offenders and prohibiting all forms of trafficking.<sup>8</sup>

The Child Protection (Amendment) Bill 2005 provides for a new Section 13A, which deals explicitly with the problem of trafficking in children. The law provides Mauritian courts jurisdiction over trafficking offenses for the purpose of exploitation committed within and outside Mauritius. It also makes provision for the unlawful transferring of a child.<sup>9</sup> Offenders found guilty of child trafficking are punishable by imprisonment for up to 15 years.<sup>10</sup> The amendment also addresses the physical, psychological, and social recovery of victims of harm or trafficking.<sup>11</sup> Violators shall be liable to a maximum fine not exceeding RS100,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.<sup>12</sup> The government has been running a drop-in center for child victims of sexual exploitation since 2003.<sup>13</sup>

### Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses

In March 2010, the International Organization for Migration held a workshop in Beau-Bassin, Mauritius aimed at improving the technical capacity in dealing with trafficking and child prostitution issues for the Ombudsperson for Children's Office, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Supra* note 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* note 3.

<sup>7</sup> Nasseem Ackburally, *Poor foreigners working like "modern slaves" in Mauritius*, INTER PRESS SERVICES (IPS), July 2, 2010, available at: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52034>.

<sup>8</sup> The Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 2008. May 8, 2009. [Mauritius] available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---ilo\\_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms\\_126787.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_126787.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The Child Protection (Amendment) Bill (Last Amended December 2005) (Mauritius), §3, 13A. Available at: [http://www.chr.up.ac.za/undp/domestic/docs/legislation\\_05.pdf](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/undp/domestic/docs/legislation_05.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* note 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* note 8, §5, 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* Note 8, §3, 13A(5).

<sup>13</sup> GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS. *Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare*. Available at: <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/women-site/menuitem.e164bad248cb0d54a3a5b31000b521ca/> (accessed March 9, 2011). Last accessed (March 2011).

Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare (and the Drop-In Center for child victims of sexual abuse), Rehabilitation Youth Centers (RYC), Probation Officers and some NGOs including the Mauritius Family Planning Association, and Chryzalide.<sup>14</sup>

### **Multilateral Initiatives**

On January 26, 2011, the US Embassy in Mauritius organized a conference titled: "An Assessment of Trafficking in Persons in Mauritius" in Port Louis in which Johan Moutou-Leckning, Principal State Counsel of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Inspector Maneeraj Bundree, Officer in Charge of the Police Brigade for the Protection of Minors, Mrs. Karoona Chooramun, Head of the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and Mrs. Rita Venkatasawmy, Director of the Centre d'Education et de Développement pour les Enfants Mauriciens (CEDEM), presented the work conducted by the government to identify, investigate, and prosecute incidences of trafficking in the country.<sup>15</sup>

Mauritius ratified the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in February 2009.<sup>16</sup> In 2003, Mauritius acceded to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.<sup>17</sup> The country signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990,<sup>18</sup> and in 1984, Mauritius acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.<sup>19</sup> The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography has not been ratified.<sup>20</sup> The government signed the International Labour Organization's Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor in 2000<sup>21</sup> and Convention 182 on Minimum wage in 1990.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM). *Capacity-Building Workshop on Counter-Trafficking Thursday, 18-03-2010 to Friday, 19-03-2010*. Available at: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/events/eventAF/cache/offonce?entryId=27128>.

<sup>15</sup> EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES – PORT LOUIS MAURITIUS, *An Assessment of Trafficking in Persons in Mauritius* (2011), available at: [http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/pr\\_20110126\\_tip.html](http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/pr_20110126_tip.html).

<sup>16</sup> UNITED NATIONS TREATY COLLECTION (UNTC), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en).

<sup>17</sup> UNTC. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en).

<sup>18</sup> UNTC, The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en).

<sup>19</sup> UNTC. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en).

<sup>20</sup> UNTC. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. Available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en).

<sup>21</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION. *Convention No. C182*. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C182>. Last accessed March 9, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*