

Russia



Population: 139,390,205 (July 2010 est.)
Population Growth Rate: -0.465% (2010 est.)
Birth Rate: 11.1 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Life Expectancy: total population: 66.16 years; male: 59.54 years; female: 73.17 years (2010 est.)
Literacy Rate: total population: 99.4%; male: 99.7%; female: 99.2% (2002 census)
Net Migration Rate: 0.28 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Unemployment Rate: 8.9% (2009 est.)
Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$15,100 (2009 est.)
Religions: Russian Orthodox 15–20%, Muslim 10–15%, other Christian 2% (2006 est.)
Languages: Russian, many minority languages
Ethnic Groups: Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%,

Trafficking Routes

Russia is a country of origin, transit, and destination.² It ranks among the top 10 countries of origin for trafficked human beings. Thousands of Russian women are trafficked every year into the European Union, Southeast Asia, and the United States. Russia is also a destination point for trafficking from the former Soviet Union territories, such as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Central Asia.³ Russian women are sexually exploited in the Middle East, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and Vietnam.⁴ As a transit country, Russia is part of the trafficking route from Armenia to Dubai.⁵ Through the Baltic route (Lithuania), people are trafficked to Western Europe, through

¹ CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK 2010, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/RS.html>.

² Vladimir Kovalev, *EU Presses Russia on Human Trafficking*, BUSINESS WEEK, Feb. 23, 2007, available at:

http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/feb2007/gb20070223_311905.htm.

³ Press Release, IOM, Prevention of Human Trafficking (Apr. 28, 2006), <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnAS/cache/offonce?entryId=4003>.

⁴ Report on the state of action against commercial sexual exploitation of children: Russian Federation, 2006, ECPAT International, available at: http://www.ecpat.net/A4A_2005/PDF/Europe/Global_Monitoring_Report-RUSSIA.pdf.

⁵ E.V. Tiurukanoa & the Institute for Urban Economics, UN/IOM, Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation (2006), available at: http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Unicef_EnglishBook.pdf.

the Caucasus route to the Mediterranean, as well as through Egypt to Israel and the United Arab Emirates.⁶

Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

One important contributing factor to human trafficking is the relative freedom and openness with which businesses based on child exploitation operate in Russian society. Traffickers exploit people's poverty and helplessness, lack of awareness of the law, willingness to trust, and desire to earn "easy money," as well as inadequate state support. Some population groups in Russia experience particularly high rates of poverty, labor market segregation, and limited access to effective employment, education, and welfare. Essentially, anyone employed informally, without standard social protections, runs the risk of being subject to forms of labor exploitation that verge on human trafficking.⁷

Family crises, combined with the lack of opportunities, are some of the common reasons for trafficking. Approximately 14 million Russian children live in broken homes and are mostly cared for by women who must raise their children on much lower incomes than earned by families with two working parents.⁸

The people most at risk of sexual exploitation are young uneducated women, low-income migrants, sex workers, and children from children's homes. The most vulnerable to labor exploitation are low-educated young men and women, the homeless, migrants, and the unemployed.⁹

Also, since Russia is richer than its neighbor countries, it serves as a more attractive destination point for migrants from surrounding countries. Traffickers then exploit this desire to migrate.¹⁰ The victims of trafficking are often defrauded into taking attractive job offers that would require seasonal work in the country with "guaranteed" pay, board, and lodging.¹¹ They are also dependent on their traffickers for food, shelter, and other basic necessities, while prostitutes are blackmailed by traffickers threatening to divulge their occupation to their families.¹²

A key factor that aggravates the current human trafficking situation out of Russia is expanding options for migration. A significant number of the migrants are female minors; almost 10 percent come from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and face severe sexual exploitation and discrimination. Due to the lack of adequate information, about 70 percent of women in Russia searching for a job abroad believe they will be employed as dancers, governesses, waitresses, or models, and therefore do not check the credibility of the information before responding to an advertisement.¹³

⁶ *Id.* at 5.

⁷ *Id.* at 5.

⁸ *Id.* at 5.

⁹ *Id.* at 5.

¹⁰ Kester Klomegah, *Russia: Where Migration Means Trafficking*, INTER PRESS SERVICE, April 26, 2008, <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42139>.

¹¹ *Thousands forced into sex slavery to satisfy perverted fantasies of the rich*, EXPRESS GAZETA, June 25, 2007, available at: <http://english.pravda.ru/society/stories/93968-0/>.

¹² HEATHER CLAWSON & NICOLE DUTCH, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, IDENTIFYING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: INHERENT CHALLENGES AND PROMISING STRATEGIES FROM THE FIELD (2008), available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/HumanTrafficking/IdentVict/ib.htm#Who>.

¹³ *Supra* at 5.

Forms of Trafficking

Russia is an international hub for labor trafficking and exploitation. Workers, usually from the CIS states, are illegally employed in the shadow economy, working in the sectors of construction, transportation, farming, and trade. Their freedom of movement is restricted, their documents are confiscated, and they work under vague payment terms. Many were lured by lucrative job offers with guaranteed pay, room, and board and realized the fraud too late.¹⁴

Trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the second most common form of trafficking in Russia. Over 80 percent of all trafficking victims are women and children, with 70 percent sold abroad to the sex trade. The exploitation takes several forms, such as coercion into prostitution, coercion into production of pornography, sexual slavery, and child prostitution.¹⁵ They are often recruited through advertisements seeking young women to work abroad or through marriage announcements and educational exchange programs.¹⁶

The problem of child exploitation has become “institutionalized and operating as an established system.” Experts believe that within Moscow there are between 20,000 and 30,000 children being exploited in prostitution.¹⁷

The traffickers are both very small regional groups of “entrepreneurs” and large gangs with the traditional structural division of core leaders (recruiters, owners) and periphery (helpers).¹⁸

Exploitation of people as beggars is another common human trafficking form, usually involving the disabled, children, and the elderly. In large Russian cities and on highways, their labor is used for begging as well as transport of drugs.¹⁹

Government Responses

The Russian government is increasingly demonstrating commitment to combat irregular migration and cross-border crime, including the trafficking phenomenon on its own territory. However, Russia’s criminal code is currently not in line with the provisions of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children it ratified in May 2004.²⁰

In 2001–2003, the Inter-Agency Working Group of the Legislative Committee of the State Duma drafted the Federal Law to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, which enacted a legal and organizational structure for counter-trafficking in Russia.²¹

¹⁴ *Supra* at 11.

¹⁵ *Supra* at 5.

¹⁶ *Supra* at 4.

¹⁷ *Supra* at 4.

¹⁸ *Supra* at 4.

¹⁹ *Supra* at 5.

²⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Signatories 2008*, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/countrylist-traffickingprotocol.html>.

²¹ Draft Federal Law on Countering Trafficking in Persons Mar. 18, 2003 (Russia).

In 2003, the government initiated Prevention of Neglect and Criminal Actions Committed by Minors, a project that is part of a larger program, Russian Children 2003–2006. It was designed to help children in difficult situations, including victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and improve prevention and rehabilitation systems.²²

In December 2003, the president of the Russian Federation signed a decree amending the criminal code, providing a foundation for criminalization of trafficking in persons (article 127-1), exploitation of slave labor (article 127-2), and engagement in prostitution and procuring prostitution (amended articles 240 and 241).²³ However, case experiences reveal that the criminal definition of “exploitation” makes it impossible to prosecute persons participating in human trafficking for mercenary or other motives when such an act fails to fall under article 127.1’s specified provisions on exploitation. The repealing of the Russian criminal code’s article 152 (“Trafficking in Minors”) and its replacement with the more general article 127.1 has resulted in partial decriminalization of socially dangerous offenses committed against minors. Russian legislation also lacks a definition of a “trafficking victim,” which can be found in international acts such as the Brussels Declaration.²⁴

Russia has participated on a regional level in efforts to deal with the issue of human trafficking. In November 2006, the Council of the Presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States created the Programme of Cooperation of CIS member-states to combat human trafficking in 2007–2010, which seeks to coordinate the member countries’ organizational and preventative capacities.²⁵

The Russian Federation participated in two regional seminars on action against trafficking in human beings organized by the Council of Europe in 2006–2007. However, the government has not yet ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.²⁶ Russia still does not have a comprehensive national plan of action addressing human trafficking, despite the dimension of the problem.²⁷

Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses

In 2003–2007, MiraMed Institute, an American nongovernmental organization, created The Russia Project, funded by the U.S. State Department. As a result, an organizational structure has been initiated to coordinate the rescue, repatriation, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims. MiraMed acted in partnership with the Russian NGO, The Angel Coalition, on this project. Together the two organizations have achieved a long list of accomplishments, including but not limited to Russia’s first fully operational Trafficking Victim Assistance Center, 24-hour toll-free rescue/help-lines, and

²² *Supra* at 4.

²³ Federal Law No. 162-FZ amending Criminal Code Dec.16, 2003 (Russia).

²⁴ *Supra* at 5.

²⁵ The Advocates for Human Rights, Russian Federation, 2009, http://www.stopvaw.org/Russian_Federation.html.

²⁶ Council of Europe, *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: Signatories Status 2009*, available at:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=197&CM=1&DF=&CL=ENG>.

²⁷ *Id.* at 24.

publication of the *Victim Assistance Protocol* establishing a standard of “best practice” for safe-house operation in Russia.²⁸

Russian celebrities are also included in antitrafficking campaigns, such as the one organized by IOM Moscow in December 2007. Pop singer Valeria was featured in a radio documentary, disseminating information on countertrafficking.²⁹

In addition, the Russian NGO Syostri used a U.N. Trust Fund to start a project providing trafficking information and training resources for regional use. A special focus was placed on work with partner NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.³⁰

Multilateral Initiatives

In 2006, a multilateral program was funded by the European Union, Switzerland, and the United States to combat trafficking in Russia on several levels. First, it aims to raise awareness about trafficking among high-risk groups (women, labor migrants, children). Second, it will upgrade the Russian national legislation with better capacity to enforce laws and detect, investigate, and prosecute trafficking crimes. Third, it seeks to develop cross-border cooperation between Russia, CIS, and EU countries and between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. In the field, the program will help establish a first-of-its-kind rehabilitation center for medical and reintegration support to victims, focusing on three crucial regions: Moscow Oblast, Karelia, and Astrakhan.³¹

In 2005 an international conference on “Child Trafficking and Internet Pornography,” was held in Moscow and was attended by representatives from the State Duma, investigators from the police department, and officers and diplomats from the United States. The inadequate legislation to prevent and prosecute child trafficking was discussed, and American law enforcers shared their experiences in the field. The NGO Stellit and the Novotel Hotel agreed on the adoption of a code of conduct for the tourism industry and are committed to expanding initiatives against child sex tourism to other hotels in St. Petersburg. As the problem is escalating, cooperation is needed on the part of inbound and outbound tour operators.³²

²⁸ MiraMed, <http://www.miramed.org/traffic.htm> (last visited Feb. 17, 2010).

²⁹ *Pop-Icon Against Human Trafficking*, March 2008, GLOBAL EYE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING (IOM), Mar. 2008, at 3, available at: http://iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/projects/showcase_pdf/global_eye_secound_issue.pdf.

³⁰ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), *Commonwealth of Independent States: Shining Light on Human Trafficking*, UNIFEM GENDER ISSUES, March 8, 2007, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/voices_from_the_field/story.php?StoryID=616.

³¹ Press Release, IOM Asia & Oceania, Prevention of Human Trafficking (April 28, 2006), available at: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnAS/cache/offonce?entryId=4003>.

³² *Supra* at 4.