




Modern Slavery in the Philippines

Modern slavery refers to the various forms of forced labor, human trafficking, forced marriage, and exploitation that exist in contemporary society.

Modern slavery can affect everyone in every part of the world. However, certain groups of people such as migrants, children, members of minority groups and marginalized communities, women and girls, and people with disabilities are more vulnerable to exploitation.

In the 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report released annually by the US Department of State, the Philippines retained its Tier 1 status. According to the report, the Government of the Philippines fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and demonstrated sustained efforts, despite challenges such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government increased investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, strengthened coordination across agencies and consulted survivors in developing its national action plan. However, issues such as corruption and inadequate victim screening persisted, inhibiting further progress (U.S. Department of State, 2024).

Key Facts

-  **859,000 Million People in Modern Slavery (Walk Free)**
-  **10 Million Filipinos live and work abroad**
-  **Trafficking occurs in fishing, construction and domestic work**

Child Labor and Trafficking

Children, particularly from rural areas and impoverished communities, are forced into labor in hazardous industries like agriculture, mining, and garbage scavenging in urban settings

Approx. 50,000 Filipino children working as domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation

(U.S. Department of Labor, 2023)

Forced Labor

Prevalent in industrial fishing, shipping, construction, manufacturing, domestic work, and Janitorial services

47 Forced labor prosecutions in 2023.

(US TIP Report, 2024)

Sexual Trafficking

Victims are often trafficked for sex through deception

The Philippine government identified and assisted 545 sex trafficking victims – 311 women, 46 men, 167 girls, and 21 boys in 2023.

(US TIP Report, 2024).

OCSEA

The Philippines is a hub for Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Covid-19 caused an increase in OCSEA

Exploitation coordinated through social media accounts for 90% of cases

(Disrupting Harm, 2021).

POGO Scam Centers

POGOs are firms operating in the Philippines that offer online gambling services to markets outside the country

1000 victims identified in June 2023

(US TIP Report, 2024)

Overseas Exploitation

2.3 Million Filipinos sign foreign employment contracts covering 170 countries each year.

594 Victims identified in 2023

(US TIP Report, 2024)

Government Efforts to Address Modern Slavery

- Enhanced training for law enforcement
- Access to mental and physical health care services for Survivors
- International collaboration and coordination
- National Awareness and prevention campaigns.



Legislation and Recommendations

Key Legislation



- [Republic Act No. 9208 \(Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 10364 \(Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 7610 \(Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 8042 \(Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 11862 \(Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022\)](#).
- [Labor Code of the Philippines \(Presidential Decree No. 442\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 10361 \(Batas Kasambahay or Domestic Workers Act\)](#).
- [Republic Act No. 6727 \(Wage Rationalization Act\)](#).

Recommendations



1. **Provide comprehensive support services for survivors**
2. **Train law enforcement officers**
3. **Establish a centralized data system**
4. **Involve community leaders in prevention efforts**
5. **Encourage and fund programs led by trafficking survivors**
6. **Proactively identify and assist labor trafficking victims**

“We can address modern slavery in the Philippines by focusing on four areas: we need strong laws, working together across borders, involving communities, and listening to survivors. We also need to protect victims and punish the traffickers.”

- Nicholine Zaragosa, Survivor, Buklod Laya



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