



## MALE TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

There is a growing awareness that men and boys are also victims of labor and sex trafficking and that women and girls are also subjected to forced labor. But identification and adequate service provision remains a challenge around the world for male victims.

This *Report* documents male forced labor victims who have been identified in a variety of countries and sectors: Central Asian men exploited in forced labor in Russia; West African boys forced to beg for corrupt religious teachers in Koranic schools; boys in forced labor in illegal drug production and transportation in the United Kingdom and Mexico. In South Asia, entire families are enslaved in debt bondage in agriculture, brick kilns, rice mills, and stone quarries. In South America and Africa, male victims of trafficking are exploited in agriculture, construction, mining and logging, among other industries. The forced labor of men and boys from Burma, and Cambodia on Asian fishing vessels has been the topic of increased press coverage over the last year.

The sex trafficking of boys is often hidden, reflecting cultural taboos in many parts of the world. In Afghanistan and coastal Sri Lanka, boys are more likely than girls to be subjected to prostitution; in Mexico and Central America, boy migrants are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation en route to the United States; boys in Southeast Asia are exploited in prostitution;

to a lesser extent, men are victims of sex trafficking; in recent years, Brazilian men were identified in forced prostitution in Spain and men were identified as sex trafficking victims in the United States.

Trafficking victim identification is a challenge across the board; however, to the degree authorities are trained to identify human trafficking at all, far too many look primarily for female victims and often miss male victims they encounter. When male victims are not identified, they risk being treated as irregular migrants instead of exploited individuals and are vulnerable to deportation or being charged with crimes committed as a result of being trafficked, such as visa violations. Likewise, cases involving male victims are often dismissed as labor infractions instead of investigated as criminal cases.

In implementing anti-trafficking programs, it is important that governments ensure medical, psychological, and legal assistance is sensitive to the needs of all victims, regardless of gender. Assistance could include shelter, medical assistance, vocational training, repatriation, and other aid. Governments may need to adapt some methodologies to better serve men, such as by creating drop-in centers. The goal is that governments ensure that all trafficking victims are adequately protected.

