

Response to Hearing Take Back Question
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
“Burma: Human Rights in the Aftermath of the Coup”
September 13, 2023

Co-Chair Smith: With regards to human trafficking, is the trafficking intra-country, is it inside the boundaries of Burma or are there people, whether it be in China or anywhere else, part of a network where these children and women are being sold into modern day slavery?

DRL Acting Assistant Secretary Barclay: I am not the TIP expert on this panel, but I would be happy to talk to those experts at the Department and get back to you.

Response:

Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims within Burma, and traffickers exploit victims from Burma who are sent abroad. Within Burma, crime syndicates subject women and girls to sex trafficking in massage parlors located in close proximity to refuse mining areas, including forced marriage to PRC nationals who may exploit them in sex and/or labor trafficking, and often in partnership with local government and law enforcement officials. Traffickers subject children to sex trafficking or forced labor, recruiting them at times through debt-based coercion, in teashops, small businesses, the agricultural and construction sectors, in domestic work, and in begging. Local traffickers use deceptive tactics to recruit men and boys into forced labor on palm oil and rubber plantations; in bamboo, teak, and rice harvesting; and in riparian fishing. Foreign traffickers, including PRC nationals, fraudulently recruit men and women to come to Burma and force them to participate in criminal cyber scam operations – an emergent form of trafficking into forced criminality we are seeing across the region.

Outside Burma, migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks reportedly target girls living in Rakhine internally displaced persons' camps and subject them to forced labor and sex trafficking in Malaysia. Traffickers subject members of Burma's vulnerable populations to sex trafficking and forced labor in seasonal strawberry and longan harvesting, year-round orange farming, manufacturing in registered and unregistered factories, and construction of roads and city government facilities across the border in northwestern Thailand. Traffickers use deceptive recruitment tactics and immigration status-based coercion to subject migrant workers from Shan State into forced labor on sugarcane plantations across the border in the PRC's Yunnan Province. Traffickers subject Burmese males transiting Thailand en route to Indonesia and Malaysia to forced labor, primarily in fishing and other labor-intensive industries.

Thank you again for your question on this important issue. The Department remains fully committed to combating human trafficking in Burma and around the world, in close partnership with Congress.