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# Russian Efforts to Fight Human Trafficking Among Global Worst, Report Says

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**U.S. Department of State / Youtube**

Russia has one of the worst worldwide records in fighting forced labor and sex trafficking, according to an annual report from a U.S. government anti-trafficking agency.

The annual U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons report ranks 187 countries and territories into four tiers, from countries that are seen as putting forward a genuine effort to fight modern slavery, such as empowering local authorities to work with international NGOs or contributing funding, and those who are not.

The report, released June 2018, said Russia "does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so," and has not done so for the past six years.

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"[A]uthorities routinely detained and deported potential forced labor victims without screening for signs of exploitation, and prosecuted victims forced into prostitution," the 2018 report found.

The State Department also cited Russia's reported failure to pay wages to 2018 FIFA World Cup stadium construction workers and the deaths of 17 workers last year.

In particular, tens of thousands North Koreans are believed to be in Russia, including as laborers for World Cup stadium construction, and are subjected to conditions of forced labor, the report said.

The U.S. designation ranks Russia alongside 22 other poorly performing countries, including China, North Korea and Syria.

Russia's Foreign Ministry has not responded to the latest rating.

When Russia was first downgraded by the rating system in 2013, Moscow accused the U.S. of using an "unacceptable methodology" that groups countries according to their degree of sympathy with Washington.

A Reuters investigation in 2015 reported that senior political staff in the state department watered down the report according to their political priorities. China and Uzbekistan were among those to receive better grades than the State Department's human rights experts wanted to give them, the sources said.

*Reuters contributed reporting to this article.*

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