

Trafficking in persons report released: PNG performs poorly

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The US State Department released its annual [Trafficking in Persons report](#) last week and Papua New Guinea is among the worst performers.

Ranked as 'Tier 3' by the report--meaning that it is a country whose government does not fully comply with the minimum standards on trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so--the report says that in PNG, women and children are subjected to sex trafficking and domestic servitude, and men are subjected to forced labour in logging and mining camps.

It also identified a new trend emerging in 2012 of 'mosko girls', young girls working as hostesses in bars, who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

Internal trafficking is rife, with women and girls sold into forced marriages, "while polygamy affirms attitudes that women are owned by men".

"There are reports of internal trafficking involving children, including girls from tribal areas as young as five, being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation or forced labour by members of their immediate family or tribe," the report said.

"Tribal leaders sometimes trade with each other the exploitative labour and service of girls and women for guns and political advantage."

The report also identifies that some government officials directly facilitate trafficking by accepting bribes.

This is the second time this year that the issue of human trafficking in PNG has been flagged – an International Organisation for Migration and PNG Department of Justice [report](#) released in April highlighted the growing extent of the problem.

PNG has been rated as a Tier 3 country by the Trafficking in Persons report since 2008. No other Pacific country is rated Tier 3.

However, elsewhere in the Pacific, the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Micronesia have been placed on the Tier 2 Watch List, meaning that if their respective governments do not take significant action on trafficking they may be downgraded to Tier 3.

In Asia, China was demoted to Tier 3 this year after failing to take sufficient action on trafficking. It joins North Korea as the only other East Asian country rated Tier 3.