

# AFGHANISTAN 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan is an Islamic republic with a directly elected president, a bicameral legislative branch, and a judicial branch; however, armed insurgents control portions of the country. The country held presidential elections in September 2019 after technical issues and security requirements compelled the Independent Election Commission to reschedule the election multiple times. The commission announced preliminary election results on December 22, 2019, indicating that President Ashraf Ghani had won, although runner-up and then chief executive Abdullah Abdullah disputed the results, including after final results were announced February 18. Both President Ghani and Abdullah declared victory and held competing swearing-in ceremonies on March 9. Political leaders mediated the resulting impasse, ultimately resulting in a compromise, announced on May 17, in which President Ghani retained the presidency, Abdullah was appointed to lead the High Council for National Reconciliation, and each of them would select one-half of the cabinet members.

Three governmental entities share responsibility for law enforcement and maintenance of order in the country: the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, and the National Directorate of Security. The Afghan National Police, under the Ministry of Interior, has primary responsibility for internal order and for the Afghan Local Police, a community-based self-defense force with no legal ability to arrest or independently investigate crimes. In June, President Ghani announced plans to subsume the Afghan Local Police into other branches of the security forces provided individuals can present a record free of allegations of corruption and human rights abuses. As of year's end, the implementation of these plans was underway. The Major Crimes Task Force, also under the Ministry of Interior, investigates major crimes including government corruption, human trafficking, and criminal organizations. The Afghan National Army, under the Ministry of Defense, is responsible for external security, but its primary activity is fighting the insurgency internally. The National Directorate of Security functions as an intelligence agency and has responsibility for investigating criminal cases

























































































for other matters reported they experienced discrimination within the judicial system. Some observers, including female judges, asserted that discrimination was a result of faulty implementation of law. Limited access to money and other resources to pay fines (or bribes) and the social requirement for women to have a male guardian affected women's access to and participation in the justice system. Women do not have equal legal rights, compared to men, to inherit assets as a surviving spouse, and daughters do not have equal rights, compared to sons, to inherit assets from their parents.

By law women may not unilaterally divorce their husbands, but they may do so with the husband's consent to the divorce, although men may unilaterally divorce their wives. Many women petition instead for legal separation. According to the family court in Kabul, during the year women petitioned for legal separation twice as frequently as in the previous year.

Prosecutors and judges in some provinces continued to be reluctant to use the EAW decree, and judges sometimes replaced those charges with others based on the penal code.

The law provides for equal work without discrimination, but there are no provisions for equal pay for equal work. The law criminalizes interference with a woman's right to work. Women faced discrimination in access to employment and terms of occupation.

Female political figures and activists were the targets of assassinations and assassination attempts throughout the year. On December 24, unknown gunmen killed women's rights activist Freshta Kohistani, along with her brother.

Unknown gunmen attacked Fawzia Koofi, a former lawmaker and member of the government negotiating team in intra-Afghan negotiations, who sustained minor injuries.

Similarly, Zarifa Ghafari, the mayor of Maidan Shahr (capital city of Wardak Province), survived two separate assassination attempts. On March 22, unknown gunmen fired on her car; she did not sustain injuries. On October 3, unknown gunmen ambushed her car, but she again escaped unharmed. On November 12, assailants shot and killed Ghafari's father, an army colonel. The Taliban

acknowledged responsibility for the attack. Ghafari claimed the Taliban killed her father to discourage her from serving as mayor.

On August 25, unknown gunmen shot at the car carrying actress and women's rights campaigner Saba Sahar. Sahar and her companions were injured in the attack.

On November 8, Abdul Sami Yousufi, a prosecutor specializing in ERAW cases, was killed by a group of unidentified gunmen on motorcycles of Herat city. The Herat Attorney General's Office opened an investigation following the killing.

On November 10, media outlets reported that unidentified assailants attacked and blinded Khatera, a female police officer, for securing a position on the police force. According to media reports, the attackers were tipped off by Khatera's father. Khatera blamed the Taliban for the attack, although they denied responsibility.

## **Children**

**Birth Registration:** A citizen father transmits citizenship to his child. Birth in the country or to a citizen mother alone does not bestow citizenship. Adoption is not legally recognized.

**Education:** Education is mandatory up to the lower secondary level (six years in primary school and three years in lower secondary), and the law provides for free education up to and including the college level. UNICEF reported that approximately 3.7 million children, 60 percent of whom are girls, were not in school due to discrimination, poverty, lack of access, continuing conflict, and restrictions on girls' access to education in Taliban-controlled areas, among other reasons. Only 16 percent of the country's schools were for girls, and many of them lacked proper sanitation facilities. Key obstacles to girls' education included poverty, early and forced marriage, insecurity, a lack of family support, lack of female teachers, and a lack of nearby schools.

Violent attacks on schoolchildren, particularly girls, hindered access to education, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban. The Taliban and other extremists threatened and attacked school officials, teachers, and students, particularly girls, and burned both boys' and girls' schools. In February, Taliban militants set fire to

a girls' school in Takhar Province, burning all equipment, books, and documents.

There were press reports of sexual abuse perpetrated by teachers and school officials, particularly against boys. The government claimed families rarely pressed charges due to shame and doubt that the judicial system would respond. There were reports that both insurgent groups and government forces used school buildings for military purposes. School buildings were damaged and students were injured in Taliban attacks on nearby government facilities.

**Child Abuse:** The penal code criminalizes child abuse and neglect. The penalty for beating, or physically or mentally disciplining or mistreating a child, ranges from a fine of 10,000 afghanis (\$130) to one year in prison if the child does not sustain a serious injury or disability. Conviction of endangering the life of a child carries a penalty of one to two years in prison or a fine of 60,000 to 120,000 afghanis (\$800 to \$1,600).

Police reportedly beat and sexually abused children. Children who sought police assistance for abuse also reported being further harassed and abused by law enforcement officials, particularly in bacha bazi cases, which deterred victims from reporting their claims.

On September 21, police officers in Kandahar Province beat and raped a 13-year-old boy who died of his injuries. The Attorney General's Office reported seven suspects were in custody at year's end and that it filed indictments against them at a Kabul district court in November for assault, rape, and murder.

NGOs reported a predominantly punitive and retributive approach to juvenile justice throughout the country. Although it is against the law, corporal punishment in schools, rehabilitation centers, and other public institutions remained common.

In 2019 human rights defenders exposed the sexual abuse of at least 165 schoolboys from three high schools in Logar Province, alleging that teachers, principals, vice principals, fellow students, and at least one local law enforcement official participated in the abuse. The release of videos of some the rapes and exposure of the scandal led to at least five honor killings of the victims. Two human rights defenders were subsequently placed in NDS detention after exposing the allegations, forced to apologize for their reporting, and continued to face

threats after their release, prompting them to flee the country. The Attorney General's Office investigation into the scandal resulted in the identification of 20 perpetrators, 10 of whom had been arrested by year's end. Nine of the perpetrators were convicted of child sexual assault by the Logar Primary Court, which handed down sentences ranging between five and 22 years' imprisonment. Another four men were indicted by the Attorney General's Office in early September of raping a male student. One of the suspects, a high school headmaster, was the first government employee to face charges of child sexual assault related to the Logar bacha bazi case.

There were reports some members of the military and progovernment groups sexually abused and exploited young girls and boys. UNAMA reported children continued to be subjected to sexual violence by parties to the conflict at an "alarming rate." According to media and NGO reports, many of these cases went unreported or were referred to traditional mediation, which often allowed perpetrators to reoffend.

The government took steps to discourage the abuse of boys and to prosecute or punish those involved. The penal code criminalizes bacha bazi as a separate crime and builds on a 2017 trafficking-in-persons law (TIP law) that includes provisions criminalizing behaviors associated with the sexual exploitation of children. The penal code details the punishment for authorities of security forces involved in bacha bazi with an average punishment of up to 15 years' imprisonment. Although no police officer had ever been prosecuted for bacha bazi, eight officers were arrested during the year in connection with bacha bazi incidents and charged with "moral crimes," sodomy, or other crimes.

The Ministry of Interior operated CPUs throughout the country to prevent the recruitment of children into the ANP, although the CPUs played a limited oversight role in recruiting. Nevertheless, recruitment of children continued, including into the ANP, the ALP, progovernment forces, and Taliban. Additionally, the government did not have sufficient resources to reintegrate children into their families once they had been identified by the CPUs.

**Child, Early, and Forced Marriage:** Despite a law setting the legal minimum age for marriage at 16 years for girls (15 years with the consent of a parent or

guardian or the court) and 18 years for boys, international and local observers continued to report widespread early and forced marriages throughout the country. By EVAW decree those convicted of entering into, or arranging, forced or underage marriages are subject to at least two years' imprisonment; however, implementation was limited.

By law a marriage contract requires verification that the bride is 16 years old (or 15 years old with the permission of her parents or a court), but only a small fraction of the population had birth certificates.

**Sexual Exploitation of Children:** The law criminalizes sexual exploitation of children. In addition to outlawing the practice of bacha bazi, the penal code provides that, “[i]f an adult male has intercourse with a person younger than the legal age, his act shall be considered rape and the victim’s consent is invalid.” In the case of an adult female having intercourse with a person younger than the legal age, the law considers the child’s consent invalid and the woman may be prosecuted for adultery. The EVAW decree prescribes a penalty of 10 to 15 years’ imprisonment for forcing an underage girl into prostitution. Taking possession of a child for sexual exploitation or production of pornographic films or images constitutes trafficking in persons under the TIP law regardless of whether other elements of the crime are present.

**Displaced Children:** During the year NGOs and government offices reported high numbers of returnee families and their children in border areas, specifically Herat and Jalalabad. The government attempted to follow its policy and action plan for the reintegration of Afghan returnees and IDPs, in partnership with the United Nations; however, the government’s ability to assist vulnerable persons, many of them unaccompanied minors, remained limited, and it relied on the international community for assistance. Although the government banned street begging in 2008, NGOs and government offices reported large numbers of children begging and living in the streets of major cities.

**Institutionalized Children:** Living conditions for children in orphanages were poor. NGOs reported as many as 80 percent of children between ages four and 18 in orphanages were not orphans but from families unable to provide them with food, shelter, schooling, or all three. Children in orphanages reported mental,

physical, and sexual abuse and occasionally were victims of trafficking. They did not have regular access to running water, heating in winter, indoor plumbing, health-care services, recreational facilities, or education. Security forces kept child detainees in juvenile detention centers run by the Ministry of Justice, except for a group of children arrested for national security violations who stayed at the detention facility in Parwan, the country's primary military prison. NGOs reported these children were kept separate from the general population but still were at risk of radicalization.

**International Child Abductions:** The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. See the Department of State's *Annual Report on International Parental Child Abduction* at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/International-Parental-Child-Abduction/for-providers/legal-reports-and-data/reported-cases.html>.

## **Anti-Semitism**

There were no reports of anti-Semitic acts. Reportedly only one Afghan Jew remained in the country.

## **Trafficking in Persons**

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **Persons with Disabilities**

The constitution prohibits any kind of discrimination against citizens and requires the state to assist persons with disabilities and to protect their rights, including the rights to health care and financial protection. The constitution also requires the state to adopt measures to reintegrate and provide for the active participation in society of persons with disabilities. The law provides for equal rights to, and the active participation of, such persons in society. Observers reported that both the constitutional provisions and disabilities rights law were mostly ignored and unenforced.

Persons with disabilities faced barriers such as limited access to educational

opportunities, inability to access government buildings, difficulty in acquiring government identification required for many government services and voting, lack of economic opportunities, and social exclusion due to stigma.

Lack of security remained a problem for disability programs. Insecurity in remote areas, where a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities lived, precluded delivery of assistance in some cases. The majority of buildings remained inaccessible to persons with disabilities, prohibiting many from benefitting from education, health care, and other services.

In the Meshrano Jirga, authorities reserved two of the presidentially appointed seats for persons with disabilities. By law 3 percent of all government positions are reserved for persons with disabilities, but government officials acknowledged the law was not enforced.

Human Rights Watch released a report in April in which a woman with a disability reported that Herat city offered no disability support services, including technical support for wheelchair damage. She told interviewers she was stranded indoors, unable to access recreational activities.

## **Members of National/Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups**

Ethnic tensions continued to result in conflict and killings. Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to NGOs, the government frequently assigned Hazara police officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior. NGOs also reported Hazara ANDSF officers were more likely than non-Hazara officers to be posted to insecure areas of the country. During the year ISIS-K continued attacks against Shia, predominately Hazara, communities. On March 6, gunmen attacked a ceremony in Kabul attended primarily by Shia Hazaras, killing 32. On October 24, a suicide bomber killed 40 persons and wounded 72 others at an educational center in a Hazara neighborhood of Kabul. ISIS-K claimed responsibility. Many of the victims were between the ages of 15 and 26.

Sikhs and Hindus faced discrimination, reporting unequal access to government jobs, harassment in school, and verbal and physical abuse in public places. On

March 25, gunmen attacked a Sikh *gurdwara* (house of worship and community gathering place) in Kabul, killing 25 and injuring 11. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for this attack. On March 26, an IED detonated during funeral services for the victims, injuring one. On March 27, police found and defused another IED near the Kabul *gurdwara*. In the months that followed, many Sikh families departed the country, going primarily to India, due to threats against Sikhs and what they perceived to be inadequate government protection. At year's end approximately 400 members of the Sikh and Hindu community remained in the country, down from approximately 600 at the start of the year.

### **Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct. Under Islamic sharia law, conviction of same-sex sexual activity is punishable by death, flogging, or imprisonment. Under the penal code, sex between men is a criminal offense punishable by up to two years' imprisonment and sex between women with up to one year of imprisonment. The law does not prohibit discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals reported they continued to face arrest by security forces and discrimination, assault, and rape. There were reports of harassment and violence of LGBTI individuals by society and police. Homosexuality was widely seen as taboo and indecent. LGBTI individuals did not have access to certain health-care services and could be fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation. Organizations devoted to protecting the freedom of LGBTI persons remained underground because they could not legally register with the government. Even registered organizations working on health programs for men who have sex with men faced harassment and threats by the Ministry of Economy's NGO Directorate and NDS officials.

Saboor Husaini, a transgender activist and artist, died in a Herat hospital after being beaten by an unidentified group of men December 25.

### **HIV and AIDS Social Stigma**



There were no confirmed reports of discrimination or violence against persons with HIV or AIDS, but there was reportedly serious societal stigma against persons with AIDS. While the law allows for the distribution of condoms, the government restricted distribution to married couples.

## **Section 7. Worker Rights**

### **a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining**

The labor law provides for the right of workers to join and form independent unions and to conduct legal strikes and bargain collectively, and the government generally respected these rights, although it lacked enforcement tools. The labor law, however, provides no definition of a union or its relationship with employers and members, nor does it establish a legal method for union registration or penalties for violations. The labor law does not prohibit antiunion discrimination or provide for reinstatement of workers fired for union activity. Other than protecting the right to participate in a union, the law provides no other legal protection for union workers or workers seeking to unionize.

Although the labor law identifies the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' (Ministry of Labor) Labor High Council as the highest decision-making body on labor-related issues, the lack of implementing regulations prevented the council from performing its function. There was an inspection office within the ministry, but inspectors could only advise and make suggestions. As a result, the application of the labor law remained limited because of a lack of central enforcement authority, implementing regulations that describe procedures and penalties for violations, funding, personnel, and political will.

The government allowed several unions to operate, but it interfered with the National Union of Afghanistan Workers and Employees (NUAWE), forcing its offices to remain closed after several raids in 2018. The Justice Ministry blocked NUAWE from holding a congress, reneged on its promise to unblock union bank accounts, and refused to return confiscated properties until after a union congress. Freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively were sometimes respected, but most workers were not aware of these rights. This was particularly true of workers in rural areas or the agricultural sector, who had not formed unions.

In urban areas the majority of workers participated in the informal sector as day laborers in construction, where there were neither unions nor collective bargaining.

## **b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

The labor law narrowly defines forced labor and does not sufficiently criminalize forced labor and debt bondage. Men, women, and children were exploited in bonded labor, where an initial debt assumed by a worker as part of the terms of employment was exploited, ultimately entrapping other family members, sometimes for multiple generations. This type of debt bondage was common in the brickworks industry. Some families knowingly sold their children into sex trafficking, including for bacha bazi (see section 7.c.).

Government enforcement of the labor law was ineffective; resources, inspections, and remediation were inadequate; and the government made minimal efforts to prevent and eliminate forced labor. Penalties were not commensurate with analogous crimes, such as kidnapping.

The government prosecuted and convicted two perpetrators of bacha bazi for kidnapping and increased the number of child protection units at the ANP. Despite consistent reports of bacha bazi perpetrated by Afghan National Army, ANP, and Afghan Local Police officials, however, the government has never prosecuted an official for bacha bazi, although the Attorney General's Office investigated and filed indictments against seven Kandahar security officers implicated in the sexual abuse and death of a boy in September. The government denied that security forces recruited or used child soldiers. Some victims reported that authorities perpetuated abuse in exchange for pursuing their cases, and authorities continued to arrest, detain, and penalize victims.

Men, women, and children (see section 7.c.) were exploited in bonded and forced labor. Traffickers compelled entire families to work in bonded labor, predominantly in the carpet and brick making industries in the eastern part of the country. Some women who were sold to husbands were exploited in domestic servitude by their husbands. Men were subjected to forced labor and debt bondage in agriculture and construction.

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at

<https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

### **c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment**

The labor law sets the minimum age for employment at 15 but permits 14-year-old children to work as apprentices, allows children 15 years old and older to do light nonhazardous work, and permits children 15 to 17 to work up to 35 hours per week. The law prohibits children younger than 14 from working under any circumstances. The law was openly flouted, with poverty driving many children into the workforce. The law also bans the employment of children in hazardous work that is likely to threaten their health or cause disability, including mining and garbage collection; work in blast furnaces, waste-processing plants, and large slaughterhouses; work with hospital waste; drug-related work; security-guard services; and work related to war.

Poor institutional capacity was a serious impediment to effective enforcement of the labor law. Labor inspectors do not have legal authority to inspect worksites for compliance with child labor laws or to impose penalties for noncompliance. Other deficiencies included the lack of authority to impose penalties for labor inspectors, inadequate resources, labor inspector understaffing, inspections, remediation, and penalties for violations.

Child labor remained a pervasive problem. Most victims of forced labor were children. Child laborers worked as domestic servants, street vendors, peddlers, and shopkeepers. There was child labor in the carpet industry, brick kilns, coal mines, and poppy fields. Children were also heavily engaged in the worst forms of child labor in mining, including mining salt; commercial sexual exploitation including bacha bazi (see section 6, Children); transnational drug smuggling; and organized begging rings. Some forms of child labor exposed children to land mines.

Children faced numerous health and safety risks at work. There were reports of recruitment of children by the ANDSF during the year (see section 1.g.). Taliban forces pressed children to take part in hostile acts (see section 6, Children).

Some children were forced by their families into labor with physical violence. Particularly in opium farming, families sold their children into forced labor, begging, or sex trafficking to settle debts with opium traffickers. Some Afghan

parents forcibly sent boys to Iran to work to pay for their dowry in an arranged marriage. Children were also subject to forced labor in orphanages run by NGOs and overseen by the government.

According to the International Labor Organization and UNICEF, millions more children were at risk of child labor due to COVID-19, because many families lost their incomes and did not have access to social support. Child labor was a key source of income for many families and the rising poverty, school closures, and decreased availability of social services increased the reliance on child labor. Many children already engaged in child labor were experiencing a worsening of conditions and working longer hours, posing significant harm to their health and safety. Aid and human rights groups reported that child labor laws were often violated, and children frequently faced harassment and abuse and earned very little or nothing for their labor.

Gender inequalities in child labor were also rising, as girls were particularly vulnerable to exploitation in agriculture and domestic work. COVID-19 also increased violent attacks on schools and teachers, which disproportionately impacted girls' access to education and vulnerability to child labor. The UN Security Council reported that nine attacks against schools occurred between April 1 and June 30. Poverty and security concerns frequently lead parents to pull girls out of school before boys.

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings>, and the Department of Labor's *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods>.

#### **d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation**

The constitution prohibits discrimination and notes that citizens, both “man and woman,” have equal rights and duties before the law. It expressly prohibits discrimination based on language. The constitution contains no specific provisions addressing discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, color, sex, ethnicity, disability, or age. The penal code prescribes a term of imprisonment of not more than two years for anyone convicted of spreading discrimination or

factionalism, which is commensurate to laws related to civil rights, such as election interference. A 2018 law criminalized physical, verbal, and nonverbal harassment, punishable with a fine, but the law remained largely ineffective due to underreporting.

Women continued to face discrimination and hardship in the workplace. Women made up only 22 percent of the workforce. Many women faced pressure from relatives to stay at home and encountered hiring practices that favored men. Older and married women reported it was more difficult for them than for younger, single women to find jobs. Women who worked reported they encountered insults, sexual harassment, lack of transportation, and an absence of day-care facilities. Gender-based violence escalated with targeted killings of high-profile women in the public sector. Salary discrimination existed in the private sector. Men earned 30 percent more on average in the same occupations as women and 3.5 times more in agriculture and forestry, where women occupied two-thirds of the workforce. Female journalists, social workers, and police officers reported they were often threatened or abused. Persons with disabilities also suffered from discrimination in hiring.

The Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Public Health jointly adopted a regulation prescribing a list of 244 physically arduous and harmful occupations prohibited to women and children, of which 31 are identified as worst forms of child labor that are prohibited to children younger than 18. It is not permissible for women and children to engage in types of work that are physically arduous, harmful to health, or carried out in underground sites, such as in the mining sector.

Ethnic Hazaras, Sikhs, and Hindus faced discrimination in hiring and work assignments, in addition to broader social discrimination (see section 6, Members of National/Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups).

### **e. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

The minimum wage rates for workers in the nonpermanent private sector and for government workers were below the poverty line.

The labor law defines the standard workweek for both public- and private-sector employees as 40 hours: eight hours per day with one hour for lunch and noon

prayers. The labor law makes no mention of day workers in the informal sector, leaving them completely unprotected. There are no occupational health and safety regulations or officially adopted standards. The law, however, provides for reduced standard workweeks for children ages 15 to 17, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and miners and workers in other occupations that present health risks. The law provides workers with the right to receive wages, annual vacation time in addition to national holidays, compensation for on-the-job injuries, overtime pay, health insurance for the employee and immediate family members, and other incidental allowances. The law prohibits compulsory work without establishing penalties and stipulates that overtime work be subject to the agreement of the employee. The law requires employers to provide day care and nurseries for children.

The government did not effectively enforce minimum wage and overtime nor occupational health and safety laws. The number of labor inspectors was not sufficient to enforce compliance, and inspectors have no legal authority to enter premises or impose penalties for violations. Resources, inspections, and remediation were inadequate, and penalties for violations were not commensurate with those for similar crimes.

Employers often chose not to comply with the law or preferred to hire workers informally. Most employees worked longer than 40 hours per week, were frequently underpaid, and worked in poor conditions, particularly in the informal sector. Workers were generally unaware of the full extent of their labor rights. Although comprehensive data on workplace accidents were unavailable, there were several reports of poor and dangerous working conditions. Some industries, such as brick kiln facilities, continued to use debt bondage, making it difficult for workers to remove themselves from situations of forced labor that endangered their health or safety.